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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

BESIDE STILL WATERS:
Exploring the practicum experience at a
small Christian College.

BY



CARRIE-LYNN SAYLER

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in
partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education.

IN

ADULT AND HIGHER EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF ADULT, CAREER, AND TECHNOLOGY

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

FALL, 1994



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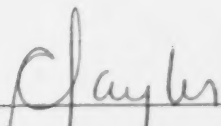
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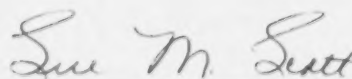


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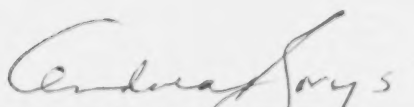
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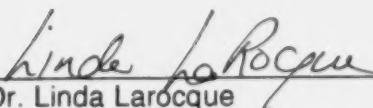
The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommended to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled **Beside Still Waters: Exploring the Practicum Experience at a Small Christian College using Qualitative Research** submitted by **Carrie-Lynn Saylor** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of **Master of Education in Adult and Higher Education**.



Dr. Sue Scott



Dr. Andrea Borys



Dr. Linda Larocque

August 30, 1994

Dedication

If those that read this document find any of it pleasing or worthy of praise, let the praise and recognition go to God, from whom comes all my strength and power.

This thesis is dedicated to my devoted parents **Dan and Lucy Sayler** in recognition of all their love and their support. It is from their actions and their words that I received the energy to continue when the road seemed dark and the storm clouds echoed with angry thunder. I shall always be grateful and eternally in their debt.

Two are better than one,
because they have a good return for their work:
If one falls down,
His friend can help him up.
but pity the man who falls
and has no one to help him up!
Also, if two lie down together, they will keep
warm.
But how can one keep warm alone?
Though one may be overpowered,
Two can defend themselves.
A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.
Ecclesiastes 3:20

Thanks Mom and Dad.

ABSTRACT

The teacher education program strives to provide students with the necessary support, resources and opportunities, for their entrance into the teaching profession. As part of the Bachelor of Education requirements, the field experience component insures candidate suitability, assesses skill aptitude and knowledge base, and maintains occupational integrity. Subsequently, all students participate in this field experience. The purpose of this study was to explore the student teachers' practicum experience and, using qualitative methods, explore and gain an understanding of the inner dimensions of this experience. Without focusing on whether the process was meeting its objectives, this study looked at what the student teachers perceived impacted on them during the practicum.

The study focused on the practicum experience of five participants involved in the teacher education program at Canadian Union College, located outside of Lacombe, Alberta. After the completion of their practicum three of the five participants remained in the study. Using the constant comparative method in grounded theory, the students shared their experiences by keeping journals throughout the process and following the practicum students were interviewed. Each set of transcripts was initially analyzed separately, providing a personalized description of the practicum process. Broad categories were subdivided into more specific headings and similarities in the data were compared to identify common properties. Units of analysis across student teachers indicated common patterns.

The nature of the practicum was described in terms of daily experiences, thoughts, feelings and interpretations. Five very distinct categories emerged: **Patterns of Relationships, The Political Arena of the Practicum, The Role of Self, The Paradox of Conflict, Evaluation — To Pass or Fail.** Each category consisted of several foundational subcategories, working together they created an overall picture of the practicum process.

While these categories made up a detailed, description of the experience, the essence of the research was the inner reaction of the

student teacher to the context of teaching. The qualitative research design enabled the participants to share their stories and in turn expose the impact their participation in the field experience had upon them. Understanding the way the practicum shaped students' perceptions, expectations and opinions enables teacher educators to improve the quality of the practicum. Simply by becoming more aware of the issues of the field experience program the process may become stronger and more in tune with the needs of both the student and the occupation.

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Clinton W. Sears — For showing me where I left my smile, painting my toenails, taking me to my first Oilers game, and remembering where I put my keys. Here's to matching cars and an eternal supply of Shake and Bake. Thank-you.

Harold W. Sager — "It is only in hearing the song that we truly understand that it is we who are singing." Thank-you for everything, my friend.

To all my friends — Yes, I can go out tonight.

Table of Contents

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY.....	1
Purpose of the Study.....	2
Research Questions.....	2
Assumptions of the Study.....	3
Delimitations and Limitations.....	3
Definition of Terms.....	3
Relevance of Study.....	4

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE.....	7
Introduction.....	7
Practicum Program.....	8
Reflective Practice.....	11
Journal Writing.....	14
Power and Politics in the Classroom.....	17
Acculturation and Socialization.....	20
Role of Self.....	23

CHAPTER THREE

METHOD AND DESIGN.....	27
Introduction.....	27
Participants.....	29
Methods of Data Collection.....	30
Data Analysis.....	32
Ethical Considerations.....	35

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH FINDINGS.....	37
Profile of the institution and research personnel.....	37
The Institution.....	37
The Participant.....	39
The Findings.....	40
Patterns of Relationships.....	40
Relating to the Cooperating Teacher.....	40

Relating to the Students.....	44
Relating to the School Staff.....	45
Evaluation — To Pass or Fail.....	47
Fear of Failure.....	48
Coping Skills.....	50
Lack of Experience and Knowledge.....	52
Alone and Awkward.....	53
Paradox of Conflict.....	57
Precursors of Conflict.....	58
Descriptions of Conflict.....	59
Role of Conflict.....	60
Political Arena of the Practicum.....	61
Choice in the Classroom.....	62
Non-Equipollent Relationship between School and University.....	64
Recommended Changes to the Practicum Program.....	67
Self in the Practicum.....	68
Journal Writing and the Role of Reflection.....	69
Role of Feelings.....	70
Role of Past Experiences.....	71

CHAPTER FIVE

ANALYSIS.....	74
Introduction.....	74
Patterns of Relationships.....	75
Evaluation — To Pass or Fail.....	79
Paradox of Conflict.....	82
Political Arena of the Practicum.....	83
Role of Self.....	88

CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS & PERSONAL RESPONSE.....	92
Discussion.....	92
Propositions.....	93
Implications.....	96
Implications for Practice.....	96
Implication for Further Research.....	99
Personal Response.....	101

REFERENCES.....	104
APPENDICES.....	113

FIGURES

FIGURE 3.1 (Rationalistic Paradigm VS Naturalistic Paradigm).....	28
FIGURE 3.2 (The Research Process).....	34
FIGURE 4.1 (Outline of Findings).....	73
FIGURE 5.1 (Relating to the Cooperating Teacher).....	76
FIGURE 5.2 (Relating to the School Staff).....	77
FIGURE 5.3 (Ed. Shareholder's Political Arena).....	85
FIGURE 5.4 (Process Contact Points).....	86
FIGURE 5.5 (Objectives of the University VS the School Classroom)..	87
FIGURE 5.6 (Crystallization of Field Experiences).....	90

APPENDICES

Appendix A (Letter of Inquiry).....	114
Appendix B (Research Participant Interest Form).....	116
Appendix C (Participant Inquiry).....	118
Appendix D (Direction Letter).....	120
Appendix E (Letter of Encouragement to participant).....	121
Appendix F (Information Sheet).....	122

TABLES

Table 1 (Relationship with the Cooperating Teacher).....	41
Table 2 (Relationship with Classroom Students).....	45
Table 3 (Relating to School Staff).....	46
Table 4 (Fear of Failure).....	49

Table 5	(Lack of Classroom Experience and Knowledge).....	52
Table 6	(Choice in the Classroom).....	63
Table 7	(Non-equipollent Relationship).....	65

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

What is it that turns experience into learning? What specifically enables learners to gain the maximum benefit from the situations they find themselves in? How can they apply their experiences in new contexts? Why can some learners appear to benefit more than others? (Boud, Keogh & Walker, 1985, p. 7)

Due to the step-like design of the teacher education program the student moves through an evolutionary journey, beginning with a theoretical introduction in university and, if successful in the first stage, concludes with a practical application of the theoretical grounding. Completing the journey is cryptic at best; there cannot be a guarantee that students will experience the facets of their program in the same way. Each student will have differing interpretations or reactions under seemingly similar circumstances. Once committed the student works through the program, according to her/his personal philosophy of life, striving to understand the education program's premise and purpose. Although program objectives work to influence student objectives, the student may reach a point where s/he has satisfied the teacher education requirements. But often this process of completing the practicum stage of her/his journey remains unclear as each student is uniquely individual.

The process of teacher education is complex and ambiguous as the many diverse influences shape the individual reality for each student. Recognizing the importance of the practicum, educators must account for both academic and non-academic factors that influence the successful completion of this vital component of the process. It begins with making sense of one's own learning in school and one's own experiences with children, develops during the undergraduate program, and becomes focused through the practicum experience, continuing on through the student teacher's professional career (Rodgers & Skau, 1991). Thus, the process of teacher education moves beyond simply reproducing and

replicating knowledge to actual transference of knowledge into practice. The result is a continual process of learning.

As a precursor to a successful teaching career, the practicum integrates the four years of education theory and places the student teacher into a classroom situation to facilitate the necessary transition from student to teacher. Such a process may not provide an adequate teaching preparatory experience. This uncertainty does not take away from the importance of the process, as research indicates student teaching is singularly the most significant factor in teacher preparation (Zerr, 1988; Zeichner, 1990; Wodlinger, 1990; Awender & Harte, 1986). Investigating the practicum program leads to a greater understanding of the process of becoming a teacher.

During the practicum experience, situations are created causing the student teacher to make crucial decisions. To be successful, in the amount of time given for the practicum, the student comes to terms with the theory gathered, processes the endless implications of it, and generates a synopsis, an understanding of the scholastic environment (culture) that they are wanting to work within. It is this culture which helps to shape their reality as teachers and continues to affect them throughout their entire professional life. The voice of the student teacher provides an understanding of the inner dynamics of the practicum which results on a clearer picture of the journey.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study is to understand the meaning student teachers make of their practicum experience. The nature of the practicum experience from the individual perspectives involve several student teachers in the preservice teacher education program at Canadian Union College located in central Alberta.

Research Questions

1. What is the nature of the student teachers' experience in the first practicum component of a small church-related college teacher education program.

2. What themes or categories emerge from the study of student teachers' reflective journals and subsequent interviews?

Assumptions of the Study

This study is conducted with the following assumptions:

1. The material in the student teacher's journal is an honest and accurate account of their experience.

2. Analysis of the student teachers' reflective journals and interviews will yield dominant categories and subcategories.

3. The participants will be open and honest in their responses to the interview questions.

Delimitations and Limitations

The study was delimited to two student teachers currently studying in the Education program of a small liberal arts college and one student teacher who recently completed the same practicum process.

The study was limited by the participants' ability to recall fully their feelings and perceptions, and by the researcher's own interviewing and interpretation skills.

Definition of terms

1. **Journal:** A personal record kept by the student teacher documenting events and experiences occurring both within and beyond the school classroom during her/his practicum experience.

2. **Reflective Practice:** A cognitive process "...through which we work our way into new understandings and give shape to our thoughts" (Montgomery, in Carswell, 1988, p. 105).

3. **Student Teacher:** A student involved in the field experience portion of the teacher education program referred to as a practicum.

4. **Practicum:** This involves the student teacher entering a school environment as a member of the professional staff. The student teacher participates in the school classroom under the supervision of a cooperating teacher with the intention of developing instructional techniques and further reflecting on their numerous life experiences and the theory learned in the university classroom.

5. **Shareholder:** The various members (university, school classroom and school community, etc...) involved in the student teacher's practicum experience.

Relevance of the Study

Research has suggested that teachers perceive the practicum component of the teacher education program to be the most prominent and relevant phase of their teacher education program is the practicum experience (Zeichner, 1990; Turney et al., 1985; Wodlinger, 1990; Awender & Harte, 1986). The university classroom and the practicum facilitate the eventual entry into a classroom and to eventually take on the full responsibility of teaching. As an apex, student teaching becomes the crucible of their learning experience. Student teaching culminates the teacher education program. According to Philip Jackson's (1968) observation of life in the classroom, the concept of teaching needs to move beyond the simplification of classroom instruction and to recognize teaching as a complex process, demanding decisions within a vortex of fluctuating classroom interactions and activities. Within this fluid plane of experiences and events, the student teacher interprets events and daily rituals, which result in defining her/his personal paradigm of teaching.

The practicum provides an institutional service, as well as an opportunity for an individualized experience (Guyton & McIntyre, 1990). From the program's perspective the result is concrete and measurable; the students either meet the requirements or they do not. During the practicum experience student teachers participate in a program where theory and practice take on a dialectic relationship. Here they test their capabilities of functioning in a classroom situation, and continue to develop a philosophy

that incorporates both their personal beliefs and their political viewpoint developed throughout their lives. The practicum experience must be planned cautiously and painstakingly because we expect them to confront a multitude of issues even though the process remains obscure.

Although student teaching is widely acclaimed as the most critical component of the teacher training program, teacher educators are criticized for not seeming to understand how the student teacher experiences this phase nor knowing how to facilitate the process adequately. Guyton & Houston (1990), state:

Some research on student teaching has been of the 'black box' variety. Data are collected before and after student teaching and compared, without any information about what goes on during student teaching. Thus, the student teaching experience becomes a black box, an undefined and mysterious variable. (p. 524)

A primary challenge for educators is to reduce the lack of clarity surrounding the student teaching practicum program, and focus on the essence of the process which is to facilitate the transition from student to teacher. In other words there is a need to articulate the experience of the student teacher. Awender & Harte (1985) suggest candidates go through the teacher training process and complete the metamorphosis from student to teacher, not because of their training but in spite of it. The skills, attitudes and knowledge necessary to develop and sustain a proficient teacher remain, for the most part, unknown.

Recent research in student teaching and the practicum program has become more naturalistic, examining more closely what is occurring during the student's field experience. By using techniques like reflective journals, the student teacher can trace the evolution of her/his growth and provide firsthand accounts of events, impressions and feelings during her/his practicum experience. By focusing on the student teacher's response to the circumstances of her/his practicum context, educators develop a better sense of what is of primary importance to the students during this process and how that affects their practicum experience and why. This information, although a subset of the much larger body of knowledge on how to make

teaching and learning more effective, must be thoroughly examined to explain our role in the preparation of the teachers of tomorrow.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the topics that emerged from the student teachers' journals: **the practicum program; reflective practice; journal writing; power and politics in the classroom; acculturation and socialization; and role of self.** The common thread running through each category is the existence of "innerness" (student centered rather than program centered). Each topic resulted from active participation in the role of student teacher. Working towards understanding the learner, not simply as a participant of the process, emerges as a need to understand experiential learning. is recognized. This chapter will relate the findings of such researchers to the six emergent categories.

The primary responsibility of the teacher education program is to promote the necessary environment and provide essential support for students to address all levels of issues in the classroom. In response to this aim, researchers have focused upon deciphering the many pieces that combine to make up the teacher education program and the practicum component in order to insure the objective is being met. McIntyre (1983) said, "it is important to understand how the people and experience itself affect the preservice teacher" (p. 115). (Alexander, Muir, & Chant, 1992; Awender & Harte, 1986; Buttery, 1990; Driscoll, Nagel, Kreiter, Chapman, 1992; Galluzzo & Kacer, 1991; Katz & Raths, 1992; Ross, 1988)

It is not to say that educational researchers and current practices have been misled, but as Smyth (1989) states, "...teachers interact with the world around them and make sense of it, adapt, and refocus what they do, we can no longer defend teaching solely in terms of competence in prescribed skills, pedagogical or otherwise" (p. 167). To achieve a richer and deeper understanding of the function of the practicum process, educators are

beginning to explore the inner confines of this process and the way the student functions within its boundaries (Zeichner, 1990; Mills, 1990; Brookfield, 1990; Brookfield, 1992; Awender & Harte, 1986).

This literature review looks at areas of the teacher training process currently being explored by a variety of researchers. It acknowledges the prevalent need to study the phenomenon of becoming a teacher. By using the socially constructed naturalistic (qualitative) paradigm, researchers are exploring the "not so easily" understood elements of the experience and how it relates to the profession as a whole. It seems researchers wish to improve the awareness of the process and the influences that shape the context which creates which "reality" for the student teacher.

Practicum Program

An overview of the practicum as described by the University of Alberta 1992/1993 Phase Three Practicum Handbook reflects the complexity and the responsibility placed upon this component of the teacher education program:

In keeping with the belief that students should be introduced to the complexities of teaching on a gradual basis, student teachers should move from participation in teaching/learning situations which are characterized initially by brief lessons, small groups of learners, less frequent and complex responsibilities, and a high degree of support in planning, to participation in teaching/learning situations that involve longer lessons with larger groups with a greater degree of responsibility for planning and organization. As well, student teachers should move from the development, application, and analysis of simple teaching skills and methodologies to more complex and sophisticated teaching skills and methodologies. (p. 2)

The expectations, both intentional and subtle, and interpretation of such is the responsibility of those immediately involved in the practicum (cooperating teacher, student teacher, faculty consultant) and the outcome is directly related to the perception, ability and self-discipline of each member involved in the program. The education profession, traditionally grounded in the competency-based format of the "pass or fail" approach, projects the same level of intensity upon the process itself (Alexander, Muir, & Chant,

1992; Britzman, 1991; Katz & Rath, 1992; Magath & Egert, 1987; Smyth, 1989; Tabachnick & Zeichner, 1984; Zeichner, 1990).

Although the traditional model of the teacher education program is metamorphic, constantly evolving, the foundational tenets of theory and practice remain firmly entrenched in the process. Time and effort ratios correspond to the individual program formats and reflect the philosophy held by the governing institution. Typically, a high level of concentrated time is placed upon the pre-practicum course structure, providing theoretical support and an opportunity to view the profession without the restrictions of actual classroom involvement. Research shows (Awender & Harte, 1986; Britzman, 1991; Frye, 1988; Goodman, 1988; Houston, 1990; Katz & Rath, 1992; Magath & Egert, 1987; Posner, 1993; Zeichner, 1990) that although a greater percentage of the student teacher's time is spent in a university classroom, student teaching is often cited as being the most useful and beneficial component of the teacher training program. The largest contributor to the student teacher's professional development according to Houston (1990) is:

Student teaching and related school experiences have emerged as an entrenched and widely accepted component of teacher preparation. These assertions are supported by teachers' consistently high ratings of student teaching as the single most beneficial segment of their teacher education program. (p. 514)

According to Frye (1988), student teaching is "...the *most important element* in the teacher education program" (p. 54). (emphasis added). Tabachnik and Zeichner (1984) agree, "student teaching does have a significant impact on the development of teachers, an effect that is strengthened during the early years of a teacher's career" (p. 29). As student teachers begin to participate in the classroom, they discover their role and their identity and see the value of working directly with the students and other members of the teaching profession.

Although "...student teaching is seen as being helpful, often to the point of being judged the most important aspect of teacher preparation" (Zahorik, 1988, p. 11), there is overwhelming "support for student teaching by teachers and also teacher educators" (p. 9). Even though support is

overwhelming, it is not unanimous. "It cannot be assumed that just by placing students in practicum sites will automatically provide them with valuable experiences" (Goodman as cited in Ross, 1988, p. 107). Zeichner (1990) suggests that, "...one should not assume, as has often been the case in the past, that experience equals educative experience and that the more experience, the better" (p 108). George Posner (1989) states:

If your field experience is to be educational, then it will have to help you learn something about teaching, about yourself, about learners, about your subject matter, or about the social milieu. (p. 141)

The practicum has the potential to limit learning and not fulfill the expectations that are placed upon it. "Practice is inextricably connected to institutional contexts that have a history, are composed of interpersonal and organizational relationships of power, and are marked by conflicting wants and interests" (Cervero & Wilson, 1994, p. 25). Field experience, although decidedly valuable, carries with it an ambiguity and complexity that may be necessary for stimulating thought but may be responsible for creating confusion.

The site of the practicum is a contentious issue. It has sparked debate on the effectiveness of placing student teachers into randomly selected practicum sites. Some educational researchers question why schools have agreed to accept student teachers into their organization. Smith (1992) and Zeichner (1992) suggest that a professional development center, a school site designed to facilitate the practicum process, provides a better learning environment for the student teachers than assigning student teachers to cooperating teachers. With time, energy and money utilized and focused on providing an introduction to the classroom demands, professional development centers can cater to the needs of those involved in the practicum process. Providing a specifically tailored environment increases the potential of facilitating the transformation successfully from student to teacher.

Opponents to the professional development center model suggest that students enter a false teaching environment and, therefore, encounter unrealistic expectations and superimposed requirements. The traditional model of field experience (i.e. student teacher assignment to a cooperating

teacher) is defined as an unchanged, "unencumbered", unpredictable school setting. To modify the process to include paranormal (out of the ordinary) support of the student teacher would deviate from cultivating the independent and autonomous teacher necessary in the classroom (Awender & Harte, 1986; Britzman, 1991; Goodman, 1988).

The timing of the practicum varies with the view of the practicum. One perspective suggests that the field experience's component be offered in the final phase of the teacher education program. Researchers who advocate this model conclude that the additional time spent in the classroom is not as valuable as the continuous academic grounding and maturity that result from the additional contact and time spent in the university program (Awender & Harte, 1986; Britzman, 1991; Goodman, 1988).

Instead of having the practicum at the end of the teacher education program, proponents suggest that field experience be organized throughout the teacher education program. The goal of this format is to introduce the student teachers to the classroom at an early stage in their program and encourage them to continue participating in the school community throughout the entirety of their educational program. Teacher educators believe that field experiences early in the education program encourages students to become acquainted with the concerns of the classroom and assists them in crystallizing their career choice (Goodman, 1988; Houston, 1990; Katz & Rath, 1992; Koehler, 1986; Smith, 1992; Taylor, Borys, & LaRocque, 1992).

Regardless of the format selected, there is universal acceptance of the importance of the practicum experience.

Reflective Practice

A series of definitions by Boud, Keogh and Walker (1985) define reflection as :

- an active process of exploration and discovery which often leads to very unexpected outcomes. (p. 7)
- an important human activity in which people recapture their experience, think about it, mull it over and evaluate it...A generic term for those intellectual and affective activities in which individuals

engage to explore their experiences in order to lead to new understandings and appreciations. (p. 19)

- the act of becoming aware of a specific perception, meaning or behavior of our own or of habits we have of seeing, thinking or acting. (Boud, Keogh & Walker, p. 25)

- the association of ideas: the bringing together of new and old in a way that can be the basis of working to integrate them. (p. 64)

Within the education literature, the term reflective practice has become part of the professional jargon. As a result of its wide acceptance, an ever growing cache of definitions and uses is found. Thought by some to be a modern day panacea for the problems plaguing the teacher education program, reflective practice in teacher education essentially helps interpret the experience.

The process of reflection is a deliberate, purposeful activity that allows an individual to contemplate behaviors and events and reactions to them. More than that, reflection is a natural process that facilitates the development of future action from the contemplation of past and/or current behavior. (Wodlinger, 1990, p. 127)

Reflective practice, as defined by practitioners using the Schon model, follows the procedure of looking back at recent events, of current and past experiences, constructing one's own perceptions and understanding one's own actions and beliefs. Reflective practice results in a process of acknowledgement and recognition of the segments and patterns of one's life which encourage a greater awareness. Wodlinger (1990), used reflection as a method of investigation (reflective practice) in his study and suggested that original and rarely seen insights were observed in the practicum process:

...this process involves the selection of an event or series of events that are of particular significance to the writer and analyzing the experience and reactions to them. (p. 121)

Reaching beyond the external and easily observable patterns of the student teachers, reflection allows both the student and the researcher/observer access to the internal workings of a person, allowing one to draw out the essence of the student experience.

Many researchers subscribe to the interpretation that teaching involves the interaction of complex human beings in an even more

labyrinthine collection of events and circumstances. There is an urgent need for research in teacher education to turn its attention to closer and more subtle analyses of the effect of university courses, milieu, procedures, and rituals upon the development of the professional identity of student teachers (Bolin, 1988; Carswell, 1988; Craig, 1983; Roderick, 1986; Shuy, 1987; Stover, 1986; Yinger, 1985; Mills, 1990). By exploring the relationship of assumptions to the overall representation of beliefs, reflective practice can open the way to uncover the dynamics of the process.

Nystrand and Wiederspiel (1977) claim that the reflective process, especially when writing about matters of personal importance allows the writer "... to break through to new constructions and new meanings for experience" (as cited in Wodlinger, 1990, p. 105). Kincheloe (1993) suggests examining the experience in direct relationship with the role of participant:

We can never apprehend the world in a "true" sense, apart from ourselves and our lives. As living parts of the world we are trying to figure out, we can only approach it from the existing cognitive infrastructures that shape our consciousness. Limited in this way, we can only see what our mind allows. (p. 111)

As reflective practice encourages the student teachers to explore the fullness of their involvement in the classroom and begin to put a concrete handle upon the magnitude of their experience, there is call to ensure that reflection does not become merely a program buzzword. Simply asking the student teacher to think about the events around them fails to extend the process beyond a superficial linking of process to program. Kincheloe warns of the dangers of blindly labelling any deep thinking exercise as reflective practice:

...camp followers repeat the mantras of reflectivity without addressing just what it is that they should be reflecting about or what criteria for evaluation they should employ in the process. Without a system of meaning to help prioritize and assess the quality of reflection, the activity can become a vacuous enterprise. (p. 205)

Coming from a post-modernist orientation, Kincheloe, although skeptical of the current usage of reflection, suggests reflective "inquiry" is at the heart of reconceptualizing teacher education and can be used for the benefit of the

student teacher as well as for the program. As student teachers begin to reflect on their experiences, their background, and the social and political infrastructure of the school, they develop a richer and more complete sense of the education profession. Kincheloe (1993) states:

As they deconstruct the taken-for-granted practices, beliefs, and assumptions of teaching, such (student) teachers break through the fog of expert knowledge that has often served to stifle progressive change in the schools...(and) explore and critique their tacit knowledge, their experiences in school, and their beliefs about teaching. The objective is not to induce teacher education students to deny the pertinence of these experiences, but simply to critically examine the beliefs in a way that leads to higher order thinking and practice. (p. 220-221)

If researchers utilize this method of self-reflection as a tool for research, both the student teacher and the researcher benefit from the added insights and more detailed description of the process.

A number of ways have been identified to facilitate reflective practice among student teachers. For example, journals, cohort groups, and interactive logs are suggested (Bolin, 1988; Boud, Keogh & Walker, 1985; Carswell, 1988; Craig, 1983; Roderick, 1986; Shuy, 1987; Stover, 1986; Yinger, 1985; Mills, 1990). Reflective practice encourages communication and provides a clearer picture of the practicum of becoming a teacher and a better understanding of what it takes to facilitate student teacher's growth.

Journal Writing

How do I know what I think until I see what I say. (Forster in Holly, 1989, p. 3)

The earliest known journals date from around 56 AD in the Orient, when they were preserved as historical documents. Journal writing is not gender specific. Journals are kept by all classes and occupations of persons. Recognized as both a public and personal venue, journals have the potential to serve a variety of purposes — as logs of events or personal exposes of some stage of the writer's life. Generally, personal journals provide a means to discover, record and clarify ideas and thoughts on numerous topics: "...not least among these were the mysteries, the inner sources and the ambiguities of life itself" (Fulwiler, 1987).

The ability to capture a glimpse of someone else's reality makes the personal journal a valuable tool for research. As a source of information, the use of personal journal writing allows the researchers to read about the internal and the affective dimensions of the participant's experience.

An important contribution of writing is that it provides an objectivity in relation to the initial learning experience. It can clarify the initial experience by removing it from the clouds of subjective feeling that can obscure it. It is a way of distancing oneself from the experience, which has the effect of clarifying and fostering the ability to work with it, so that the learner can draw out potential learning. It can focus the learner's attention on what actually happened in the initial learning experience. It helps distinguish between what happened and how the learner interpreted what happened, or experienced what actually happened. (Boud, Keogh & Walker, 1985, p. 63)

Journal writing helps to bridge the gap between what we perceive as reality and what we think reality should be.

As a tool of teacher educators, journal writing can be utilized to access the many levels of a student teacher's thought processes and to encourage her/him to reflect on and interpret information and the many messages that are encountered and experienced during their learning experience.

The writing about the particular incident, the specific experience of being touched by new knowledge, seemed to bring with it a whole association of feelings and ideas that were within the participant. It was like opening a door and having the contents of a room fall out. This then had to be worked with, and it was. However, through the use of writing, the material that was to be processed surfaced and was captured. (Boud, Keogh & Walker, 1985, p. 65)

Journal writing can provide both student and researcher with access to the heart of the student teachers' experience by encouraging them to be reflective on their own thoughts. There are many ways in which reflective thinking can be encouraged, but research shows that the process of personal journal writing is one of the most powerful. (Bolin, 1988; Carswell, 1988; Craig, 1983; Roderick, 1986; Shuy, 1987; Stover, 1986; Yinger, 1985)

With the experience of physically recording events in the daily course of their practicum, student teachers are engaged to revisit the situation but

from a more objective and safer distance. Recreating the event encourages student teachers to become aware of their own understanding of what happened in the classroom and how it affected them.

The language and experience of the writer coalesce in the very act of writing. Uttering concretizes and makes public. To communicate, man (sic) expresses himself, i.e., he actualizes himself, he creates from his own substance, like the fruit one squeezes in order to get juice from it ... to name is to call into existence. (Nystrand, Martin, & Wiederspiel, 1977, p. 110)

Journal writing reveals how student teachers were thinking and what they were discovering at the time of their writing. Similarly, students, who during the process of their practicum, write journals and reveal the way they are interacting with the classroom or the subject matter influence their philosophy and perceptions about the profession of teaching.

Since it is essential to determine the effectiveness of the practicum program's design, how better to do so than to get first hand feedback. Journal writing provides both the student teacher and others with an established account of the events and relevant material to the experience, providing contextual grounding. As the student teacher documents the daily events and trends, interspersed with personal interpretations of these events, a picture of the practicum begins to unfold. Without the addition of outside input or influences, journal writing takes on a puritan expression of interpretation. Journal writing, as a rich source of information, provides an example of a student teacher's typical day in the natural setting in which it occurred (Lincoln & Guba, 1986).

As a tool for research, journal writing adds a new and previously unaccessible dimension in the search to understand the student teaching experience. As uniquely as each person passes through the program so, too, is her/his response to the breadth of experiences encountered. "The use of language through the medium of journal writing is especially valuable in developing new awareness about experience and in constructing new meaning from experiences" (Wodlinger, 1990, p. 117).

Journal writing provides both the writer and the reader with a text to examine the classroom experience and to explore the implications and the

ramifications of the practicum experience. Student teachers are provided with a rich and descriptive account of their personal experience, viewing the world of teaching from their own vantage point.

Power and Politics in the Classroom

Power relationships exist in all human interactions and define what people are able to do in a particular ... situation. (Cervero & Wilson, 1994, p. 29)

Education is *never* politically neutral. (emphasis added) (Heaney & Horton as cited in Mezirow, 1990, p. 85)

The increased diversity of students' background and ability, as well as recognition of value-laden environments are making teaching a far more complex enterprise.

One of the main societal institutions shaping identity through the exercise of power in dominant and subordinate relationships is education. (R. Smith, 1991, p. 4)

...education is a political and ideological activity intimately connected with the social inequalities of society as a whole. Because the judgments are made in a world of unequal and shifting relationships of power, they are inherently ethical and political, not technical. (Cervero & Wilson, 1994, p. 21)

As educators' focus more and more on the structure of teacher education programs, it is becoming apparent that the process of becoming a teacher is a total, all-encompassing feat requiring the cooperation of all involved. Once teaching was perceived as a matter of learning and being able to regurgitate the information in front of willing recipients. Today teaching is being recognized as an increasingly complicated and multifaceted activity — grounding in the context from the situation where teaching occurs. The teaching profession is changing and the mode and methodology of teaching professionals is being assessed and changed to meet the needs of the classroom. Researchers Cervero and Wilson (1994) concur:

...educational programs are planned by real people in complex organizations that have sets of historical traditions, relationships of power, and human needs and interests. (p. 4)

Through recent renewal, awareness and recognition of politics in the classroom, traditional definitions are being questioned. Power and political influence have been a part of the education profession for as long as there have been students and teachers.

Teacher training programs have traditionally been the proponents of skill development and competency based programming in the education profession. Kincheloe (1993), interprets the value-free directives of this technical orientation with the following:

Context-stripped by the view that teaching is a technical act, political issues are far removed from the consciousness of prospective teachers, as they memorize the generic theories and the fragments of the knowledge base. (p. 205)

This focus suggests that teacher training reduces the student teacher learning experience to a value-free environment where "technique" or activities are delivered in the name of efficiency. Adult educators Tom Heaney & Aimee Horton (1990) affirm also:

Schools and universities adopt narrowly defined missions that serve society's dominant agenda and preserve the status quo. Schools and universities are places to get away from day-to-day life, not vehicles for immersion into struggle. They emphasize the development of individuals who, through schooling and the mastery of knowledge and skill, will be 'advantaged' in rigged competitions for status and fortune. (Mezirow, 1990, p. 95)

Practicum is a continuation of learning to teach. Thus Goodman (1984) states: "As is common in most institutional settings, students entered a pre-existing world when placed in a practicum site. This 'world' has certain customs, rules, belief systems and behavior patterns that were largely taken for granted as being normal" (p. 7). Although the effect of these "customs, rules, belief systems and behavior patterns" on student teachers have not been addressed nor have their effect on their learning, the student teacher existence is being recognized as important step in discovering the totality of the educational experience of student teachers.

The combination of classroom "customs, rules, belief systems and behavior patterns" and the school create a political atmosphere in the

teacher education program. As the members enter into the practicum situation each brings with her/him a set of values and a perception of how education works. "The presence of many shareholder groups, that is, groups affected by and/or desiring an input into decision making, results in diverse views on most issues pertaining to teacher education" (Leskiw in Leavitt, 1992, p. 61). As in any large organization, the greater the number of independent members attempting to collaborate, the greater the clash of interests on power issues.

Education is not excluded from this phenomenon:

It has long been acknowledged that faculties of education are at the vortex of expectations between universities and the educational community. Universities demand a scholarly and research orientation while school proponents desire a practice-orientated approach, including periodic return to teaching in their classroom. (Leskiw in Leavitt, 1992, p. 52)

Special interests and power issues are not easily dealt with. The student teacher is placed in this crucible forged by the many shareholders and is carefully observed to see if s/he can perform according to the pre-set evaluative standards of the practicum. Learning to teach and to improve one's teaching means learning to make one's classroom practice more closely match either the practices advocated in college courses or those exhibited by cooperating teachers, with the two often conflicting (van Manen, 1982). Little time and effort is spent dealing with the issues that arise on the personal and theoretical fronts.

...implementation is seen as merely the translation of the theories of the university into classroom practice. That theories are generated by practices and that practices reflect theoretical commitments, either is not grasped or is deliberately ignored. The relationship between theory and practice is seen as one-way rather than dialogic. In a dialogic relationship theory and practice inform each other. (van Manen, 1982, p. 298)

Encouraging student teachers to become mere rule-followers belittles their intellectual capacities, creating dissatisfaction and a tendency for the best and the brightest to leave teaching (Awender & Harte, 1986; Buttery, 1990; Houston, 1990; S. Smith, 1992; Valli, 1992).

Complexity coupled with political assumptions and expectations demonstrates a necessity to identify and understand potential power issues that emerge in the practicum. Due to the hierarchical nature of supervision, in order to best facilitate the learning experience of the student teachers, educators need to be aware of the multitude of issues that are encountered and to effectively prepare the student teachers to recognize the concerns and address them.

In an attempt to address power concerns and issues in the practicum, educators have begun to recognize the political reality of the school, classroom and of education's shareholders. As the student teacher realizes that s/he is placed in a politically and value-laden culture, the response of the student to the context influences her/his ability to interact in the classroom. One such initiative has been to manipulate the amount of time spent in the university and the time spent in the classroom. Although there has been a call to increase the amount of pre-service time spent in the classroom, there has also been a mirror motion to increase the academic grounding of student teachers. The result is a no-win situation. As the length of the practicum time is increased, the more academic credibility is reduced. The more classroom time and higher education is emphasized, the less relevant the program appears to be.

Acculturation and Socialization

Upon entering the field experience portion of their education program, student teachers are introduced to yet another facet of the educational organization. Having spent many years in many different types of classrooms, the student is now invited to participate in this familiar process from a new angle — as a professional educator, a teacher. Being in the classroom introduces the student teacher to the culture of the teaching profession (Alexander, Muir, & Chant, 1992; Awender & Harte, 1986; Brown & Hoover, 1990; Ekunobi, 1986; Goodman, 1984; Ross, 1988; Smith, 1991; Zahorik, 1988). With or without recognition, the school classroom environment and the immediate school community makes a direct and definite impact on the student teacher.

Hallowell (1955) states that culture is defined as a group who "...share a 'world view' that combines their symbols, values, beliefs and behaviors that reflect their immediate environment and how they react with outside change." (p. 583) As a student in school, the student teacher has participated in this culture for several years without realizing the full extent of the culture, nor recognizing the many nuances of the culture. Cultural values and beliefs remain abstract as non-members have not had the necessary personal experiences to understand fully the symbolism and history behind them. Participation, as an educator, within the classroom environment is the primary method of becoming acquainted and learning about the culture that the student teacher is wishing to become a part of (acculturation). The practicum experience permits the acculturation of the student teacher into the teaching profession.

Hallowell (1955) continues by suggesting that acculturation is a part of simple evolution and cyclical growth:

...sophisticated knowledge of how a human being is groomed for the kind of life and social preparation that prepares him [sic] for one kind of culture rather than for another, and likewise passing it on. (p. 599)

If acculturation is indeed part of the learning process of every student involved in the education program, then it would be advantageous to learn about it and understand the influence and the effect acculturation has and how it can be utilized to the benefit of the student.

Acculturation contributes to the overall student teacher identity and professional development. Learning about and working with the essential components of the teaching profession can encourage the student teacher to adopt a more encompassing view of the make-up of an educator. The influence of the cooperating teacher is powerful as a model of the teaching profession. Because of the sheer complexity of the education profession and organization, experience within the classroom and the school community is the primary method of becoming acquainted with the dynamics and the expectations of the field. Because of the nature of the practicum, the cooperating teacher is most dominant factor or force in influencing the

socialization of the student teacher. (Alexander, Muir & Chant, 1992; Brown & Hoover, 1990; Ekunobi, 1986; Ross, 1988; Smith, 1991; Zahorik, 1988).

Acculturation is the result of the phenomenon of socialization that occurs readily on every educational front that the student encounters. Ekunobi (1986) defines the process of socialization as, "the business of adjusting people to the way of life of the community, usually into its customs, beliefs, rituals, conventions, expectations, and demands, combined with instruction and the setting of examples." As the student teacher begins to move within the parameters of the classroom, socialization can occur as a result of interacting with staff, students, university personnel, cooperating teacher and parents. Each facet of the practicum experience carries with it the potential to be an active part of the student teacher's socialization into the education profession.

Although socialization is a dominant part of defining the student teacher's professional and social identity, it is not necessarily a pleasant or positive experience. The more traditional, final-phase placement of the practicum, student teachers are introduced to the schools in the same way. In the smaller Christian college, the practicum model facilitates that student teachers are often sent out alone to schools they know little about and with which the university has little contact. Although they work closely with a cooperating teacher, they are cut off from peers, from the university and often feel isolated within their cooperating school where they know few teachers and are not always included into the social organization of the school (Awender & Harte, 1986; Brown & Hoover, 1990; Ekunobi, 1986; Ross, 1988; Smith, 1991; Zahorik, 1988).

Within the school community, socialization can trigger many political and pressure-filled situations. If the student teacher is unaware of the possible situations that may arise as a result of socialization, complications could surface. Britzman suggests that this mentoring role is difficult to perform, taking time and specific training before most teachers can feel comfortable with and are competent in the role. This, too, will factor in the student teacher's assessment of the socialization process once in the classroom (1991).

Socialization of student teachers can also influence the expression of effective teaching skills. Student teachers attempting to survive a rather hectic and emotionally-trying period use familiar instructional strategies and one's modeled by cooperating teachers to reduce the shock resulting from their unfamiliar surroundings and responsibilities. Browne and Hoover (1990), suggest that although practice and experience is a good teacher of teachers, despite the testimony of many teachers that experience has been their most influential teacher, the practicum is increasingly being called into doubt. Their research suggests that people learn best from experience when they have been trained to learn in that way and when they have the support from one or more persons who can provide feedback, discuss alternative behaviors, and facilitate interpretation of an action on their perceptions.

The process of socialization can also be of a positive nature. The student teacher may be given the opportunity, as well as the support, to participate in all areas of the classroom. Within the classroom environment, the culture and essence of the education process emerge as mere building blocks, units of subcultures that combine to create the larger and prominent structure of education and learning. As the student teacher experiences each of the pieces of school culture, within an encouraging and supportive environment, s/he will experience the very nature of education at work.

Role of Self

Student teachers not only gain ideas about teaching and learning from their experience as students, they also gain beliefs about the system of education as a whole, for example, about the purpose of education and how high school education connects with college education. (R. Smith, 1991, p. 12)

As the student teacher begins her/his practicum, s/he is also entering the next phase of their experience, crossing the threshold of student to teacher. This metamorphic experience, as subtle or as significant as it may be, forces the candidate to come to terms with their previous educational experiences. The classroom environment also transforms as the student teacher begins to take an administrative role. All of these changes combine to create the catalyst for the formation of the professional identity of the future teacher (Alexander, Muir, & Chant, 1992; Awender & Harte, 1986; Carson,

1992; Chandler, 1989; Johnston, 1992; KottKamp, 1990; Lund, 1984; Powell, 1992; Ross, 1988; R. Smith 1991).

The role of self, it's influences, expectations and responses, plays an important role in structuring the philosophical stance of the student teacher. Prior school experience creates a 12+ year observatory and participatory foundation on which student teachers base their perceptions and expectations. The teacher education program must then recognize that student teachers are more than simply "blank sheets". Past experiences, beliefs, and involvement in the planning and structuring of the education courses must be recognized (Alexander, Muir, & Chant, 1992; Awender & Harte, 1986; Brodbelt & Wall, 1985; Brookfield, 1992; Carson, 1992; Chandler, 1989; Johnston, 1992; KottKamp, 1990; Lund, 1984; Posner, 1993; Powell, 1992; Ross, 1988; R. Smith 1991; Wodlinger, 1986).

Perception plays a very vital role in the exploration of self and how the role of self interacts with the preconceived beliefs and values of the field experience. If student teachers are encouraged to address their perceptions of their experiences and how those experiences influence their reactions in the classroom, there would be both a greater awareness of what is happening and a greater depth of understanding of why the situation occurs. Without this opportunity for self-recognition and self-exploration, the process of the practicum becomes a complex operation of replication and reproduction. The classroom becomes an isolated experiment without any reference to the life experiences before or in conjunction with the entering of the classroom experience. Without recognition of previous experiences, the student teacher is encouraged to imitate the practices and behaviors of those s/he comes in contact with. By not addressing the role of past experiences, the patterns the student teacher is most familiar with is often consciously or unconsciously repeated (Awender & Harte, 1986; Brodbelt & Wall, 1985; Chandler, 1989; Johnston, 1992; KottKamp, 1990; Lund, 1984; Powell, 1992; Ross, 1988; Smith 1991; Valli, 1992).

...memories from childhood school days and the concrete actions of cooperating teachers are more powerful instructors than abstract notions of teaching conveyed in university courses. (Valli, 1992, p. 19)

If it is the primary objective of the teacher education program to facilitate the personalized interpretations of the educational occupation, foundational guidelines need to include and account for the role of self and the powerful influence previous experiences can have on the successful completion of the course.

"When student teachers merely imitate their cooperating teachers they have difficulty teaching on their own because they have not developed a consistent, internalized philosophy of instruction, have not found a style which suits them and cannot adapt their behavior to new and different situations." (Browne & Hoover, 1990, p. 22)

Prior school experience plays an important role in constituting the student's sense of identity as it encourages the student teacher to develop reflective capacities and engage in consciously informed action rather than impulsive or tradition-locked action. Boud, Keogh, and Walker (1985) emphasize the importance of acknowledging the learner: "The response of the learner to new experiences is determined significantly by past experiences which have contributed to the ways in which the learner perceives the world. (p. 21) They continue by indicating, "...in all situations we find that our perceptions of events are conditioned by past experience which has shaped our response to the world around us, and that knowledge of how this has affected us is unknown or unknowable to a teacher. (p. 22) Browne and Hoover (1990) suggest that acknowledging the role of self aids in the development of a true professional identity:

One thing is certain, the pressures upon teachers leave them little opportunity to reflect upon the nature and origins of their practice. It is essential, therefore, that teacher education programs offer trainees an opportunity to reflect on the experience of being a student. Without this opportunity, there is little chance for a break in the cycle of students becoming teachers who replicate the forms of teaching which so limited their own lives. (p. 21)

Conclusion

As researchers continue searching for new ways to improve the teacher education program, there will always be a need to analyze the nature of the program. Allowing the student teacher and educators involved

in the practicum to become contributing sources of information, the body of knowledge will continually develop.

CHAPTER THREE

METHOD AND DESIGN

Introduction

To answer the question what is the nature of the student teachers' experience in the first practicum component of a small church-related college teacher education programs, requires alternative methods. To understand the personal experience of students involved in the teacher education program, research must first examine the individual perceptions of those students while immersed in the program. With each facet of the program the student teacher's perceptions seem to vacillate and the sheer chameleonic complexity of the program challenges a researcher to capture the essence of the experience. The need for a clearer understanding of the nature or essence of the practicum calls for educators and researchers to address the types of events, circumstances, and experiences that occur in the teacher education program that ultimately, influence and shape future teachers.

Qualitative research can best answer the above question and can capture the essence of the school context. Qualitative research "...offers a systematic method by which to study the richness and diversity of human experience and to generate relevant, plausible theory which can be used to understand the contextual reality of social behavior" (Hutchinson, 1988, p. 127). This type of research moves beyond the variable focus of quantitative research into the place where people and social context combine, creating and recognizing multiple realities of the situation. Delving into the core of the practicum process, qualitative methods allow for a richer portrayal of the teacher training process.

Investigating under the positivist philosophy limits the human element of the research on the practicum by attaching static variables to a context that infinitely changes with every new minute of each day. Hutchinson (1988) comments "...human reality is not simply 'out there' awaiting scientific

study...it is socially and symbolically constructed, always emerging and relative to other facts of social life" (p. 124). The specific focus and rigidity of the rationalistic (empirical) methodology, undeniably, holds great value in the scientific community and has been responsible for exceptional research. With the advent of qualitative methodology the research team of Guba and Lincoln have proposed the following elements in response to the criticism and questioning of the usefulness, purpose and "trustworthiness" of such research. (see Figure 3.1)

Figure 3.1

Rationalistic Paradigm	Naturalistic Paradigm
1 Internal Validity	1 Credibility
2 External Validity	2 Transferability
3 Reliability	3 Dependability
4 Objectivity	4 Confirmability

(Guba & Lincoln, 1982)

Naturalistic research explores context and how context influences the content of the study. Credibility and transferability are points of proof, striving to prove relevancy. The credibility of a study is constructed as the research participants assess whether or not the data represents a true and honest picture. Is the respective picture of the research able to be generalized to other similar populations? The aim in qualitative research is to provide as complete a picture as possible through "rich" and thick description, and to allow for some degree of usability by others involved in similar contexts.

Dependability and confirmability incorporate the participant's response to the analysis and findings, ensuring stability and relevance. Moving away from the premise that all information must be tested for reliability and objectivity, qualitative research places the emphasis on the researcher as the instrument involved in an "inter-subjective agreement" with participants. It seeks to draw a picture of an experience as stable and as true to form as possible. The focus, now centered on the researcher as well as the research participant, moves away from a myopic focus to utilize an inclusive, flexible, more complete representation of what is occurring.

Participants

Five participants were finally selected for this research. During the spring, 1991 and fall, 1992, students from the education program at CUC were available for this study. I chose to ask only those students who were involved in either the junior high or secondary education programs. Initial contact was made with the Education Department to verify whether students in this program would be accessible to the researcher. Having received written permission to conduct the research on campus, a list of names was submitted by the Chair of the department listing perspective practicum program students. For the specific purpose of this study, criteria was developed to aid the researcher in selecting the participants: 1) interested in the research topic 2) willing to write in a journal; 3) would be participating in a practicum; 4) be available for interviews after the practicum.

The selection of the participants is purposive. Merriam (1989) states that "purposive sampling is based on the assumption that one wants to discover, understand, gain insight; therefore one needs to select a sample from which one can learn the most" (p. 48). I wanted student teachers who would write, feel free to be reflective and who were articulate. The participants were comfortable with the requirements of the study and were willing to allow the researcher access to their practicum experience and the data generated from it. Several weeks into the practicum, two of the participants were unable to fulfil the research requirements and did not continue to participate in the research. One participant encountered some personal difficulties and decided not to continue as a student in the

education program. The other participant chose not to submit her journal at the end of her practicum and dropped out of the study.

Methods of Data Collection

One of the most useful activities that can initiate a period of reflection is recollecting what has taken place and replaying the experience in the mind's eye, to observe the event as it has happened and to notice exactly what occurred and one's reactions to it in all its elements. (Boud, Keogh & Walker, 1985, p. 27)

Student teachers were encouraged and given the opportunity to use their own voices to describe issues and events that occurred during a practicum experience. The data collection involved a two phase approach. It utilized both a written portion, and face to face interviews. Journals and interviews provided the primary sources of data, the journal material being a springboard for the interviews.

In the first phase of data collection, the student teachers were asked to write in a journal at least three times per week for a minimum of 20 minutes per entry. The researcher suggested the participants follow the format of utilizing both sides of the pages in the journal, one side of the page to record the entry or events, and the second side to reflect or analyze upon what they had written. The writing component sought to capture the details of their daily experience and facilitate reflection on the student teacher's reality. As Kent states, "Writing involves expressing one's ideas in words, which in turn involves crystallizing and clarifying the ideas for oneself. ...writing is thinking." (p. 269) The journals were the primary source describing what went on in the student teacher's classroom. Journal writing is "...the private, self-expressive, and reflective writing one can do as a way of understanding self" (Craig, 1983, p. 373), and the process of becoming a teacher. At the end of the practicum the journals were collected and transcribed for analysis.

Tape recorded interviews comprised the second phase of data collection. Every conversation, every exchange of words between the participants and the researcher conveyed new information regarding the complex and ambiguous experience of each student teacher's development. Taylor & Bogdan (1984) state,

Qualitative interviewing has been referred to as non-directive, unstructured, and open-ended interviewing...By in-depth qualitative interviewing we mean repeated face-to-face encounters between the researcher and informants directed toward understanding (the) informants' perspectives on their lives, experiences, or situations as expressed in their own words. (p. 77)

Interviews were conducted at several sites. Two participants allowed me into their home where two one hour interviews were conducted, while the third participant provided three interviews, two being in his home and one in a restaurant. Based on the information in the student's personal journals, the interviews questions focused on descriptions of the student teacher's practicum experience and sought to build upon and clarify the information in the journals. Each of the interviews was taped and transcribed, verbatim, by myself. The interviews clarified my understanding of the events that shaped the practicum experience.

The journals and interviews allowed the researcher to have access to the student teachers' perceptions of specific events occurring during the practicum, permitting the identification of central insights from each viewpoint to build an account of their experience. As well, the interviews provided the student teacher the opportunity to contribute additional insights.

A grounded theory is one that is inductively derived from the study of the phenomenon it represents...it is discovered, developed, and provisionally verified through systematic data collection and analysis of data pertaining to that phenomenon. Therefore data collection, analysis, and theory stand in reciprocal relationship with each other. One does not begin with a theory, then prove it. Rather, one begins with an area of study and what is relevant to that area is allowed to emerge. (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 23).

The emergent themes and categories were continually discussed with the student teachers. Their comments about the content of the transcription provided direction for further analysis. Utilizing the students' feedback when continually requesting and asking for clarification and verification, the subsequent interviews confirmed the truthfulness of representation of prior interviews and coding.

A review of the "Guidelines for Practicum Students and Cooperating Teachers of Canadian Union College" provided a document analysis. This analysis help set the criteria for evaluation and what was expected for both the student and cooperating teacher.

Data Analysis

To understand and interpret the information emerging from the study of the student teacher's journals and subsequent interviews, I used the constant comparative method to analyze the data. The research design encouraged a rich and detailed description of issues and events that affected a student teacher's practicum experience. This information will be helpful in guiding the teacher educator's guide practitioner's efforts to increase awareness of the experience of student teaching.

The constant comparative method in grounded theory was used with both the journals and the interviews. This contributed to the overall description of a student teacher's reality by determining the meaning of the separate parts and then again, relate the pieces back to the whole. This procedure again influenced the meaning of the separate parts and the process would begin again.

Analysis took place over an extended time period to capture a more involved picture of the practicum experience. After the practicum was completed the student teachers submitted their journals for transcribing. Working first through the journals and then the subsequent interviews, the data was continually analyzed and, with each contact of the material or the participants, my interpretation was rewritten. Initially many themes emerged. Because I wanted to find common themes across all three of the participants, I noted the similarities. Then I sorted through the units of analysis and coded each one which helped to organize the information collected.

In time I began to collapse the units of analyses into similar themes under categories of similarities. As I combined the units of analyses into broader, more generalized labels, I was able to discover unique and specific, shared properties among each of the emergent themes. By combining categories under an umbrella term, five thematic categories

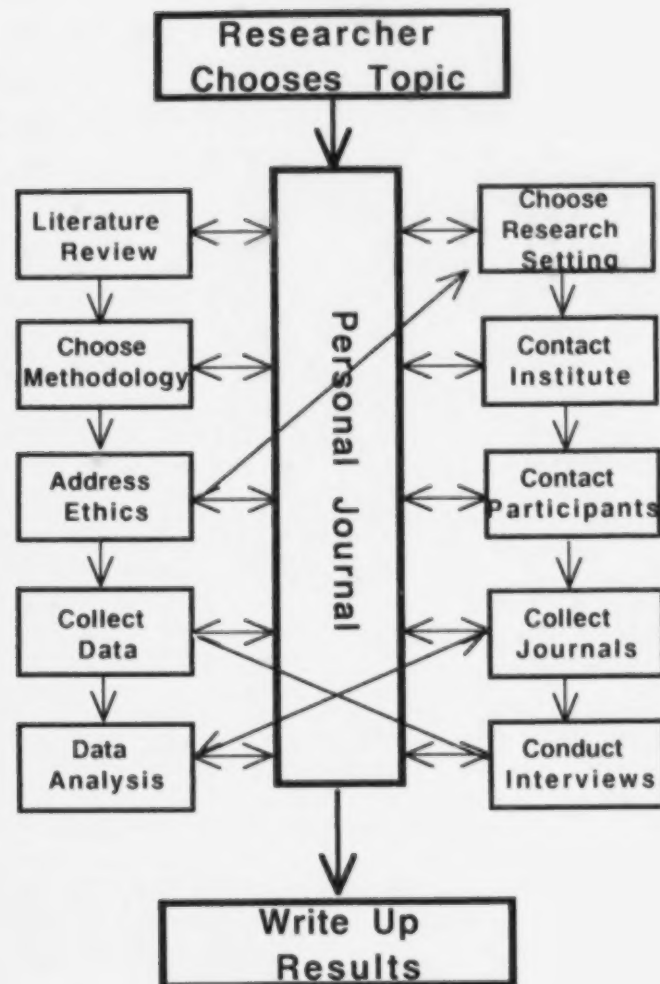
emerged: the practicum program; reflective practice; journal writing; power and politics in the classroom; acculturation and socialization; and role of self. The more I worked with the material the better sense I had of what was taking place. At each step I consulted with the participants and gained further insight as to how accurate the labels were and how accurate my understanding was of the data.

As I moved through the open coding procedure into developing categories and eventually constructs, information emerged to help me understand how each student teacher perceived her/his experience. Each phase of analysis was influenced by my personal journal writing. My personal memos and notes provided me with a feedback system enabling me to see through some of my personal biases and the issues encountered by the student teachers. It also facilitated a level of interpretation which contributed to the analysis of the findings.

The constant comparative method encouraged me to continually immerse myself in the data until a point of figurative saturation took place. Some thematic categories were subsumed by others. Analysis of the journals and the interviews directly influenced my own thought processes. I, too, was actively journal writing throughout the whole process. This information, which at first did not seem relevant to the research, was an important, informal, way of contextualizing the scene. By reflecting on the data and the actual methodology, I was constantly making changes and refocusing on the descriptive picture that was emerging.

Figure 3.2 shows the process of this research. Each phase builds on the previous one, not in a linear way but rather the process inter-relates with each preceding phase and constantly refers back to the previous information and grounding. As I worked through the traditional steps of the research process, the complexity of previous work cross-referencing with present perceptions influenced future directions. All the technical elements worked in a synergistic dynamic. Without this interactive nature the process would have become strict, rigid, and box-like. "The relation of thought to word is not a thing but a process, a continual movement back and forth from thought to word and from word to thought" (Vygotsky in Lund, 1984, p. 12).

Figure 3.2



The Research Process

Using open coding as a guide, each piece of information was labelled and worked into working categories (Corbin and Strauss, 1990). By constantly comparing the information, the data were manipulated into smaller, more concise categories. As the categories stabilized and patterns were set, it became clear that there were sub categories that became the foundational grounding for the larger categories. At this point, instead of working to reach new, more inclusive categories, I chose to show the inter-

related nature of the process by exposing the relationship between the categories and the subcategories.

Ethical Considerations

What they will do as individuals and professional researchers may have a far reaching impact on unnamed and unknown individuals and subgroups in our society. Education is a public trust. All who are given the power to shape and direct it have a great responsibility for the way that the lives of numerous human beings turn out. (Soltis, 1989, p. 130)

After the initial meeting with department head, the participants were informed of the intent of the study and those that displayed interest in participating met personally with the researcher and were given an outline of the pending research. They also were informed of the option to withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences for doing so. The participants signed a permission form stating their compliance to the methodology (see Appendix B), allowing their journals and the subsequent interviews to be used. After transcribing the interview audio tapes, the journals were returned to the participants and they were asked to choose a name other than their own to ensure anonymity.

The participants were given the option as to whether or not the researcher had permission to use direct quotes taken from their journals. All participants gave permission to have the journal entries typewritten for analysis. Following the completion of their practicum and the typing of the journals, the researcher interviewed the participants. A copy of the transcribed interview was given to each student, allowing each to check for accuracy, to make any additional comments or changes and to keep a copy for her/his own records. The participants also decided whether the researcher had their permission to show entries of their journal or transcripts of the interviews to the researcher's thesis committee.

Permission to use the institution name was decided by the executive committee of the institution (See Appendix A). If the executive committee decided that the name was not to be used then an appropriate name would have been designated. The participants had the final verdict in whether or not the name of the institution would be used in the document.

I was not involved in the student teachers' journal writing process during their six weeks of practicum experience nor monitored their data entries. I collected the journals at the completion of the practicum experience and typed the journal entries verbatim. The journal entries were analyzed for emerging themes and ideas. Using grounded theory methodology, the data were coded and placed into emerging categories. Upon completion of the research, the journals were returned and the audio tapes of the interviews were destroyed.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Introduction

The text speaks of a possible world and of a possible way of orientating oneself within it. (Ricoeur, 1976, p. 88)

This chapter presents the findings of research that focused upon the practicum experience of the three student teachers in this study. The data trace their individual progress and growth. By mapping the journal entries and studying the participants' response to the entries, a descriptive picture of the practicum experience emerges.

Profile of the institution and research participants

A brief profile of the institution and of the student teachers will comprise the first part of this chapter.

The Institution

The participants in this research projected attended Canadian Union College, a small liberal arts college located in central Alberta, Canada. This college is run by the Seventh Day Adventist Church and is part of their higher educational organization of colleges and universities. Currently between 350 and 400 students are admitted and with a positive growth potential.

The college offers a variety of degrees, ranging from a Bachelor of Arts to Theology, Business Administration to Pre-Med. Some degrees are granted by the college itself, others are granted in affiliation with Union College, located in Lincoln, Nebraska.

The Department of Education offers a four year B.Ed. degree, with specializations in Secondary Education, Junior High Education, and Elementary Education. The overall objective of the College is to provide

students involved in the teacher education program with a well-rounded and balanced approach to teacher training. The students involved have the flexibility of choosing areas of focus.

The practicum consists of two six week periods with the goals:

1. Help the student understand and see the relevance of other aspects of the teacher education program and to place academic work in context.
2. Provide the student with an opportunity to observe and study the process of education and the operation of schools in a variety of settings.
3. Provide the student with opportunities to practice and test theories and hypotheses relative to teaching, to develop teaching skills and styles and to begin to develop a distinctive teaching personality.
4. Provide students with opportunities to make decisions regarding the suitability of their chosen profession.
5. Make provision for feedback which may improve the program.
6. Introduce the student to, and develop the role of, the teacher as a professional.

(Guidelines for Practicum Students and Cooperating Teachers, Department of Education, no publication date.)

Practicum placements are made in Seventh Day Adventist Church schools located across Canada or one of the local public schools located near the college. Subsequently, student teachers may find themselves placed in schools as far away as Newfoundland or in a school near the college campus. Because out of province students are enrolled in the education program, they are given the opportunity to complete the practicum requirements in a school near their permanent residence.

The Dean of Education is responsible for arranging the placements, visitations and evaluations as it is his responsibility to make the initial contacts. At Canadian Union College, the number of department staff involved in practicum supervision is limited. This factor combined with the potential of having to do visitations out of the province puts a strain on the staff. There is often a sharing of the practicum responsibilities, dividing up the duty of school visitation between other members of the staff. This system allows for staff other than the Dean to conduct school visitations. If this is not possible, the responsibility of actual visitation and evaluation lies with the Dean of Education.

If the student teacher is placed out of province, supervision is problematic. Distance can contribute to the possibility of a missed meeting time or not having the opportunity for extended contact time with the student teacher.

As students approach their practicum, they are given the name of the host school, the subjects they will be teaching and the name of the cooperating teacher. As well, they are given some informative documents and practicum guidelines.

The student teacher is assigned to a cooperating teacher and a faculty consultant may only get to view the teaching of the student teacher once or twice in a six week period. In addition no callbacks are organized. As a result the student teacher works closely with the cooperating teacher.

Participants

Each participant was involved in their first six week practicum. In order to protect the anonymity of the research participants, a brief profile follows.

Ariel

Ariel is married with no children. She is in her early twenties and comes from eastern Canada. Ariel has wanted to be a teacher for several years and feels that teaching is part of her calling. Ariel felt that the process of the practicum was a great learning experience and helped her to solidify her ideals.

Marie

Marie is single and in her early twenties and comes from western Canada. Marie has been exposed to teaching from an early age since both her parents participated in the education system. Her experience in the classroom has been beyond that of the average educational student. She has had contact with the teaching profession for several years when as a student she has been called upon to present lessons to her peers. She has participated in the social milieu surrounding the educational organization in

a variety of capacities. Marie has wanted to be part of the teaching process and feels that she will make an excellent teacher.

Larry

Larry is married with no children. He is in his early twenties and comes from western Canada. Larry sees his educational degree as a stepping stone into another profession. His education degree will provide him with other occupational options. Although his area of specialization interests him, he is not prepared to commit to the teaching profession.

The practicum provided him with insights into the teaching and the teaching profession. At the conclusion of the practicum, he felt he had increased his understanding of himself.

The Findings

The participants' journals and interviews described experiences, views, thoughts, feelings and opinions which were later analyzed, categorized and coded. Five major categories emerged from the data: 1) **pattern of relationships**; 2) **evaluation — to pass or to fail**; 3) **the paradox of conflict**; 4) **political arena of the practicum**; 5) **self in the practicum experience**. Each main category was composed of smaller, related foundational sub categories. This structure reflected the complexity of the practicum experience and the emerging symbiotic nature as the process of describing the larger picture by examining the smaller pieces. In this chapter the subcategories are presented in a tabular form supported by the more traditional explanatory narrative.

Patterns of Relationships

The participants noted by that they interacted primarily with the cooperating teacher, the students and particular school staff.

Relating to the Cooperating Teacher

The practicum followed the more traditional format where the student teacher was assigned to a primary cooperating teacher. Because the assigned placement was with a cooperative teacher participants describe

and record specific examples, both negative and positive, that defined the relationship between themselves and their respective cooperating teachers.

The cooperating teacher (CT) was the primary adult person with whom the student teacher worked in the classroom. This person was responsible for facilitating the classroom experience as well as providing regular evaluations.

Table 1: Relationship with the Cooperating Teacher

Participant	Ariel	Larry	Marie
Subject: Cooperating Teacher	• I was very uncomfortable with some of her procedures...I think that part of that was personality. Just some sort of a personality clash. • ...I felt that she had such high standards that I felt that I wouldn't meet up to them even though I had such standards myself. • My only complaint, so far, with my practicum is having my CT around. I don't care if it's important, it weakens my teaching and that's what I'm here to do.	• I never asked him any questions on how to teach it and he never offered any suggestions • ...basically, once I started teaching the class, he was gone. • A lot of the time he wasn't even there, ... Lori was there. She talked about school and that and what was going on and what changes had been made.	• I'm glad he doesn't just stick me in charge and leave like I've heard a lot of teachers do. • ...I went to his house and that gives you a bit of the background right away about the person. You know, in this day and age if a person has a nice family and everyone seems comfortable with each other...its like, O.K. we have the first step down. • When we went to school, we car pooled and we got to talk and so I think that helped.

Since Seventh-day Adventist schools have relatively low numbers of staff (small school enrollment) and are spread out geographically, the number of willing cooperating teachers is somewhat limited. Larry and Ariel were placed in Seventh-day Adventist schools and Marie was placed in a local public high school. Marie and Ariel were placed with cooperating teachers close to the campus whereas Larry completed his student teaching in an out of province school. Marie and Ariel worked with one cooperating teacher

each whereas Larry worked with two cooperating teachers. Table 1 includes student teacher quotes that describe the relationships that developed between the cooperating teacher and the student teacher.

The foregoing quotes depict a differing picture for each candidate. Open channels of communication and personal interaction resulted in a successful relationship pattern Marie and her cooperating teacher. Larry and Ariel experienced difficulty in their relationship with their cooperating teacher. Although Larry's had two cooperating teachers to work with, his experience with his cooperating teacher(s) was one of irregular contact and limited communication.

He just basically left it to me. He just said 'here is the material and here are the resources and kind of do what you want with it'. (Larry)

Larry's perception of his relationship the primary cooperating teachers was particularly poor. The connection between himself and his cooperating teacher began with little or no exchange of ideas nor was information provided in relation to expectations, objectives or goals. Larry received little or no feedback or evaluations about the work that he was doing in the classroom. Without any feedback, in the form of formal or informal evaluations, Larry questioned the credibility of the program as well as the commitment of his primary cooperating teacher [John]. This questioning grew to include Larry's questioning of the credibility of the practicum program. A poorly relationship with his CT influence his perception of the practicum experience.

Larry's second cooperating teacher [Lori] made a greater effort to establish a supportive relationship with Larry. Although the contact time spent with the second teacher was much less than the primary cooperating teacher (*one class with Lori versus three classes with John*), Larry appreciated the time and effort she put into his practicum experience and that she had the most influence on his practicum experience; "...especially her classroom management. Nobody messes around with Lori."

Ariel's relationship with her cooperating teacher mirrored Larry's experience. From the onset of her practicum, she was concerned with figuring out the routines of the cooperating teacher and adjusted to her

methods Program goals and objectives became secondary to those of the cooperating teacher. Her journal entries and her interviews depicted feelings of discomfort when interacting with her cooperating teacher. Although this relationship was complicated by a personality difference, Ariel was determined to complete the program.

Unable to relate to her cooperating teacher, Ariel found it difficult to understand her own needs and determine the requirements of the classroom. At times, overwhelmed by the dynamics of a classroom combined with an unsettled relationship, Ariel felt her performance in the classroom (ultimately her practicum experience) suffered. This was hard for her to admit: "It really was kind of rough. I really don't like to observe that...." (Ariel)

Although not citing a specific classroom event, Ariel commented that her perception of herself as a teacher was influenced by her relationship with her cooperating teacher. Ariel felt her position as a student teacher, combined with a "personality clash", created a poor basis for teaching. The inability to establish a comfortable working relationship resulted in a superficial level of communication.

According to Ariel's journal, this relationship with her cooperating teacher continued to affect the practicum. In response to the question of how best to introduce a potential student teacher to the opportunities present within the classroom. She stated that:

If I were to coordinate a student teacher's schedule I'd make one important change. I would have the cooperating teacher absent from the first lesson of each subject. I have had it both ways so far -- teacher present for first lesson and teacher absent. I would say that I did 100% better when the teacher wasn't there (just for the first lesson). (Ariel)

With time, this relationship improved with the student teacher and the cooperating teacher establishing a collegial relationship. Being able to work with and receive approval from her cooperating teacher becomes one of Ariel's main goals in her practicum. In the final week, Ariel felt that she has finally arrived — she feels competent:

My cooperating teacher has made me feel competent at this job. She has only said good, encouraging things. She told me she was happy to provide me with a good reference. She told me today she's appreciated my help, my maintaining class standards, etc.-- she expected to have to redo her class when I left (start from square one with discipline and routine), but she said she feels able to slip back into place with no problem (Ariel).

Competency was the result of maintaining the cooperating teacher's program with no mention of discovering what worked for Ariel's own teaching experience.

Relating to the Students

According to the Department of Education at the college, one of their main objectives is to place the student teacher, under the care of a cooperating teacher, into a classroom filled with students:

Provide the student with opportunities to observe and study the process of education and the operation of the schools in a variety of settings.

(Guidelines for Practicum Students and Cooperating Teachers, Department of Education, no publication date.)

The relationship with students sparked another unique pattern of relationship. Students were perceived as providers of feedback and, therefore, became a valuable resource to the student teachers. The students experienced first hand the efforts of their student teacher. The focus of the relationship developed into an accessible system of response and feedback. In the situations, where Larry was not getting feedback from the cooperating teacher, the students filled the void.

Table 2 shows described the students in terms of a lab, to try out new procedures and new techniques.

Table 2: Relationship with Classroom Students

Participation	Ariel	Larry	Marie
Subject: Students	• They were like your paycheck. They were my feedback...the kids were my support. It seems kind of funny because they were the problem but they were also the support.	• They really made it all worthwhile. Probably, other than Lori, the people that I talked to the most there were students. • I just hope I have left enough of an impression to point one or two students in the direction of higher education and a fulfilled life.	• The first thing is that they are calling you Miss, you know, Miss Smith and you are looking around. Oh, I guess that is me and they are treating you like a teacher and in that instance you start to feel like a teacher.

The students in the classroom played another important role. In addition to providing a testing ground, the students provided Larry with an opportunity for social interaction as well as feedback. With little opportunity to interact with school staff, Larry felt the students provided that source of interaction. He also noted that the students' response validated his efforts in the practicum. The relationship between Larry and his students developed into more than a simple venue to ground his theoretical beliefs or to try out his techniques and skills, they provided a source of emotional energy.

For Marie, the interaction with her students crystallized her identity as a teacher and contributed to her role identification.

Understanding the role of the classroom students contributes to a more effective practicum. By acknowledging the importance of this "member" of the team, the student teachers come to see the students as more than a testing ground for theories and practices, but grow to appreciate their interaction as a valuable practicum experience for learning to becoming a teacher.

Relating to the School Staff

In the practicum there is potential for the student teacher to be introduced to all aspects of the school culture, including working with and

becoming briefly recognized as a part of the staff. As the student teacher begins to experience the classroom in all of its entirety, the transition from university student to teacher introduces a different level of participation within the infrastructure of the school. The participants were cognizant of the change in the patterns of relationships with the other members of the staff.

Relating to the staff meant becoming a member of the school culture and part of the team. When student teachers were not included they began to question their perception of what it meant to be part of the school community. According to Larry, "There wasn't any social interaction at all with the staff." The practicum experience was non-inclusive, taking on the hue of a cloistered environment. Larry felt that the way the college had organized the practicum was not conducive to providing an introduction or orientation to the other members of the staff. The school staff was not informed of the student teacher's arrival and Larry felt that that may have pre-disposed the staff members to seem cold and not unfriendly. Also, there was no orientation to the school system and the running of the school. Subsequently, Larry feels as if he is not a member of the school community nor the culture and is intruding upon the school.

Table 3: Relating to the School Staff

Participants	Ariel	Larry	Marie
Subject: School Staff	• A lot of teachers in the school, they treated me like a fellow teacher which is nice but they did it too much 'cause then they expected that I could take over their class immediately, like they could with another teacher.	• I must not degrade my fellow teachers. This is such a switch from being a student. • I don't think the other staff, they probably found out that I was coming the day before I came...so I don't think they were really prepared for it or knew how to act either.	• ...you get a lot of information by just listening and chatting with people. • They were all eager to tell how their practicum had gone and things like that...And they were telling me what to expect...you realize that they had been through it too.

Table 3 shows the participant's quotes that reflect their relationship with the school staff. Each student teacher had the opportunity to work within

the circles of the school milieu, their response those is unique and individualistic as the experience itself was.

Marie's experience was different than Larry's. Her experience with the school staff in the school was enriching and positive. There was quite a bit of interaction and as the practicum progressed the situation improved. Marie found the time spent with the other staff was a good investment and an asset to her experience. She states,

At lunch there was one lady that was a councilor and she talked about how to get a job, she spent a whole lunch hour about how to get your foot in the door in the school.

In addition to being provided information, Marie felt her association with the other staff members brought insight into her own practicum process. The staff offered new views and insights, providing valuable feedback from a neutral source, one free of a vested interest in her practicum. This support was welcomed and appreciated by Marie.

The relationship of the student teacher to the other staff of the school affected the student teacher's practicum experience. No or little relationship with the staff of the school eliminated a rich and viable resource for the neophyte student teacher. With a limited feedback system, no sense of support and not able to tap into the resources of the staff's experience, the student teacher feels alone and an overwhelming sense of isolation.

Evaluation — To Pass or Fail

In the six week period of the practicum experience the participants worked through many classroom issues, became acquainted with the school's culture and became aware of the requirements of the practicum itself. Their objective — to successfully complete the practicum experience. As if part of a silent code, the evaluation process becomes a prominent part in their experience.

The student teachers noted that the requirements of successfully completing the program did not rest solely on the basis of their teaching practices but involved meeting an unspoken criteria. The evaluation process was complex and included many levels of meaning of the experience.

Understanding the process of evaluation was as much a part of the student teacher's learning experience as the actual assessment procedure.

Each of the participants' journals referred, whether directly or indirectly, to the influence of the grading process upon their practicum experience. Four sub-categories emerged from within the data: 1) Fear of Failure; 2) Coping Skills; 3) Lack of Classroom Experience and Knowledge; 4) Alone and Awkward. Each topic explores the response of the student teachers to the process involved in successfully meeting the requirements of the practicum program.

Fear of Failure

It is a natural response to question one's ability when beginning something new. The fear of failure emerged from the data as a result of the student teachers entering into the relative unknown world of the practicum. By anticipating their progression through the evaluation process, the participants questioned the mechanics involved in completing the practicum program. As the participants became involved in the classroom experience, each action and effort had an evaluative component. The fear of failure, or not meeting up to the evaluator's standards, became a primary motivator in the participants' process.

Evaluation was conducted on several different levels: formal and informal. The informal methods of evaluation consisted of feedback received from the cooperating teacher, either verbal or nonverbal. The formal methods were written evaluations submitted every two weeks by the cooperating teacher and evaluations given by the visiting institutional representative.

Described by each participant, fear of failure was reflective in various ways: anxiety — about an upcoming evaluation; concern — about the grade itself; confusion — of what was considered acceptable.

Table 4: Fear of Failure

Participant	Ariel	Larry	Marie
Subject: Fear of Failure	• Cause if you lose it you never get it back ... you know I could have ruined it by coming in and losing control.	• I know I am doing a good job so I need not worry. I think I worry more about the grade I will get than anything.	• I have never been so glad for a class to be over with ... I survived and since that is my last time being observed I feel a lot better.

Fear of failure influenced Ariel's approach to classroom management. Her objective was to keep her classroom under control; her rationale reflected her belief that if she could not maintain control she would not be able continue with the experience and "learn to teach." The assumption that the action of losing control may have forced her to repeat the whole process or perhaps fail the program indicates how highly the evaluation impacted the actions of the student teacher.

The fear of failure also influenced Marie. The stress of the evaluation created a volatile situation that eased once her last evaluation was complete. At this point she knew she had successfully completed her practicum experience. Using the terminology "I survived" suggests that up to this point the focus may have shifted from a learning experience to a survival exercise.

The issue of evaluations, steeped in the connotation of passing or failing, continued to influence the participants in spite of their success within the classroom. The dominant effort expended by the participants was geared to achieving a successful evaluation. Coming to terms with the grading procedure was a critical part of their learning experience.

In Marie's practicum a formal (written) evaluation was also submitted every two weeks for the entire six week program provided her with formal feedback. This feedback provided the student teachers with an indication of the progress they were making and constituted the basis for the participant's final evaluation.

This same evaluation model was not followed in Larry's practicum. His cooperating teacher did not give him any formal feedback until the very last week of his practicum. A lack of written feedback combined with a limited amount of contact with this cooperating teacher created an anxiety and an uncertainty with which Larry was forced to work. From the feedback he had received from other sources, Larry concluded he was doing a good job, but, in spite of the successful classroom experience, fear of failure influenced the issue of receiving a grade:

...because you don't know how your evaluating teacher is going to grade you, because I got all my slips at the end of the six weeks from one of them...Of course you worry about it because it directly affects whether you get credit for the practicum or not. (Larry)

Dealing with the fear of possible failure in the practicum process caused each of the participants to focus upon and become familiar with their individual coping skills.

Coping Skills

The practicum experience introduced the student teachers to the aspects and circumstances of the classroom. As the student teacher began to understand the complexity of teaching, there emerged a survival instinct. Evaluation of the student teachers' ability to understand and connect to the issues that are part of the classroom environment is part of understanding the evaluation process. To be successful in dealing with the diverse needs and situations, the student teachers referred to their individualized response patterns — coping skills.

Displaying teaching strategies and classroom management skills that fit in the evaluator's concept of effectively maintaining a good learning environment came under pressure. Utilizing their coping skills became an active part of the strategy to achieve a passing grade. Moving beyond reflex and autonomic responses, the student teachers questioned the premise of their own personal philosophy and the manner in which their beliefs affected the classroom climate and school requirements.

Ariel's energies were concentrated on having the right coping skills to deal with what she labeled as the "sheer magnitude" of the complexity of teaching. This influenced her approach to teaching by shifting her focus from the response of the classroom students to her instruction and her ability to cope with the overwhelming experience of student teaching. "I wish I could work with them more, but I'm barely making it myself." The concept of "barely making it myself" indicates that having usable coping skills became an issue. Coping skills are necessary for completing the requirements of the practicum as well as preserving the wellness of the student teacher. Appropriate coping skills to maneuver through the practicum experience were identified as a concern.

As a result Ariel began to reflect on what it meant to her to be in a position where she could successfully cope with the inherent conflicts in the classroom. Ariel's coping strategy then was to be aware of what is taking place (knowledge) and not a matter of solely being a disciplinarian (control). From an interview, Ariel suggests that, "To me knowing what is going on is being in control, not being the boss of it all." In her opinion knowledge and experience interact with each other to provide her with the basis to cope in the classroom and achieve a successful evaluation.

Larry also felt strongly about the issue of control. By maintaining control in the classroom, he felt he would be able to successfully progress through the practicum. He perceived that the most valuable coping skill of the practicum was in his ability to have control. Achieving an maintaining control was a priority. Anything else would have given the impression that perhaps he was unstable and not able to maintain an efficient learning environment. Larry felt it was imperative to have a strong front, "I think if you show fear you will crash and burn."

Without this strict front, Larry felt he was opening up the way for potential failure. His coping skill for maintaining the consistency of control provided him with the sense that he could alleviate some of the potential for a bad evaluation, to pass and not fail.

Lack of Classroom Experience & Knowledge

The participants felt they entered the practicum program with a theoretical knowledge base but little experiential grounding. Therefore, the participants cited as one of their objectives was to gain experience and to test their understanding of the theoretical knowledge base. Being placed in a classroom for the first time, combined with anxiety stemming from the evaluative process, caused the student teachers to question if they could make it through. Ariel states, "You are faced with so many things that you don't even know it is a problem, yet, it is becoming a problem."

Although part of the learning process, the student teachers perceived their own inadequacies as a fault, a negative quality rather than regarding these qualities as groundwork for learning. In response to the evaluation process, knowing that, because of a lack of classroom experience and knowledge, they may fail accentuated novice-like, tentative behavior.

Table 5: Lack of classroom experience and knowledge

Participant	Ariel	Larry	Marie
Subject: Lack of Classroom Experience and Knowledge	• Teaching takes a lot of judgment. When do you step in? How?	• I just realized I have never ever taught a class before.	• Basically if you don't know the subject matter you can't help. You know, they can't ask questions...it's like I don't know. I'm just the teacher here

The student teachers found themselves involved in the various classroom situations which required making a judgment. Ariel's feelings are echoed in Larry's own response to his feelings of inadequacies regarding classroom experience:

How can it be that I can go through four years of college and never teach a class? It would be like being a doctor going to a medical school and then right into an operating room.

Lack of classroom experience and knowledge and the resulting fear influenced the practicum experience. Equating the potential loss of life resulting from an inexperienced physician to that of his entering into a teaching situation reaffirms the potency of this issue.

For Ariel, inexperience creates an uncomfortable situation. She felt she was at a disadvantage, unable to do the type of work she feels she should do:

It has been most frustrating to be pushed to the limit by the students. They are just testing the boundaries with a new teacher. This is normal and natural. But, I don't even know what to allow. I am trying to maintain my cooperating teacher's guidelines, but not every question fits in [with the guidelines] Everyone knows the rules but me and it's very hard to keep in charge when everyone knows more than I do.
(Ariel)

Not knowing the unwritten rules of classroom behavior made Ariel uncomfortable.

Although each of the participants dealt with the issue of inexperience in the classroom, the pattern emerging was as unique to the specific individual as it was to the process. Marie also noted that her lack of classroom experience directly influenced her perception of her ability to function in the capacity as a student teacher.

Initial anxiety and fear appeared to dissipate the more the student teachers participated in the classroom. Although there was still a referral to the evaluative purpose of observing their skills and their use of knowledge, student teachers began to feel that the time spent in the classroom gave the student teachers the time to ground themselves within the process. Growing through the lack of knowledge and inexperience stage was seen as a vital and integral part of the process. Marie sums it up: "I think that's what you do. You go through it once and you stumble through it and the next time you can go back and do it fluently".

Alone and Awkward

It was ... like I wasn't there [rather] than I didn't belong. (Larry)

A subcategory that emerged, parallel to the lack of classroom experience and knowledge theme, was the feeling of being alone and somewhat awkward in the classroom. This feeling may have resulted from a lack of support services or a lack of communication from the school personnel, but the result was that the student teachers perceived the practicum an exercise in self-sufficiency, magnified by the fact they would be graded. Two of the three participants felt secluded and isolated, left to process their experience on their own. The third participant described a supportive situation and did not encounter the same experience. Without support most relied on their ability to be self-sufficient.

The student teachers' conscious fear of failure was intensified by feeling alone and awkward. Two student teachers recognized the need to rely on personal responses and self motivation to be successful in their experience. "... No one can prepare us for that [the practicum] ... it is really up to us (Ariel)." Instead of orienting the student teacher to the school, Larry had limited access to the school. He seemed to be restricted to interact with members that were involved in the immediate practicum:

I kind of showed up and the principal introduced me, and then I just sat in the class and started observing and nobody even showed me where the photocopier was, I had to find that on my own...I guess I would have expected more. I had no reasons to base those expectations on anything, just I would assume that somebody coming in.... It would be interesting to see if they act that way with a new teacher coming in. Maybe it was because I was a student teacher that they didn't care that much (Larry).

Larry describes how both awkward and alone he felt in the beginning stage of his practicum experience: "...I was left to contact the school on my own, how to get there, everything. ... you see here it is, sink or swim...." The notion of "to sink or swim" reinforces that idea of the pass or fail issue was a concern before entering into the initial stage of contact.

Another facet of the practicum that contributed to feeling alone and awkward was the lack of a support available to the participants. Other than the cooperating teacher, two student teachers felt that if there was ever a problem in their program they were uncertain who to turn to for assistance.

This situation was facilitated by the dual role of the faculty consultant. As a faculty member of the institution, the faculty consultant was responsible for obtaining sufficient information to make a recommendation for the student teacher. Because of the scattered nature of the practicum sites and the lack of sufficient staff, the situation was accentuated by a lack of rapport built between the faculty consultant and the student teacher. Without a provision for support, the student teacher feels that the faculty consultant's role is more of an evaluative than supportive. For Ariel, this created a situation she felt did not work successfully:

...I felt like I could go to him (*faculty consultant*) in one way, but I'm not sure how, you know the mother who spansks the kid and the kid turns around to the mom crying, it's like I don't want to dump my problems on the guy if the guy is reporting on me. So in that way it was a little bit awkward of a situation. (Ariel)

Isolation and a lack of school involvement in the practicum, surfaces in Larry's journal. "The only time the staff would say anything was if they needed me to teach a class for them or something. I mean they would say, 'Hi.' I don't think anyone ever asked how's it going you know or what's happening".

The fear of not doing a good job is exaggerated by the lack of feedback or interaction. To pass or to fail becomes an albatross as the student teacher felt that no one has reached out to help them throughout the process.

The third participant, Marie, described an experience that was quite different from that of the other two participants. She noted that in her situation there was little isolation. From the very beginning, Marie was exposed to a high level of interaction with the other members of the school staff. This related to time spent in the school environment and, also, outside of the classroom. She spent more time with her cooperating teacher than the other two participants.

On the first day of school he was telling me a little bit about the school and so, it was like ...what do I have to expect when I get there? He's a new teacher and he always said, "I always go early because if you go late, all the kids are there and you end up fighting your way up the

stairs through all the kids." And I'm going, "oh, no, we are going to be caught in a mad rush in the halls and a stampede". (Marie)

Carpooling to school with the cooperating teacher gave them time to get acquainted with each other and gave them a neutral place to discuss classroom issues:

It gave us time to get to know each other, so then by the time we got to the classroom, it was a little easier to relate...Expectations, that kind of thing. (Marie)

Being away from the classroom and the immediate pressures of the practicum provided a less stressful environment for exploring issues of the classroom.

The type of connected relationship that developed between Marie and her cooperating teacher was both highly visible and accessible. Her close involvement with her cooperating teacher facilitated her interaction with the other faculty at the school. With such involvement, Marie did not feel the same anxiety that was created by the isolated environment noted by the other two participants.

And so I would sit with different tables and my supervising teacher would sit with me and so he would introduce me to the other staff. I got to meet a couple of other student teachers that were there at the same time (Marie).

Marie was made to feel part of the school community. The support staff of the English department also made an impact upon Marie's practicum. The amount of support given by the department's secretary alone performed the role of an informal orientation.

...she was always saying, 'if there is anything I can do for you or anything I can get for you, one person who came in here I even got them a pillow, so if you need anything. Anything you need to make your stay more comfortable,' so really accommodating. (Marie)

The vast difference in the two kinds of support illustrates how important support is to the practicum. One involves grounding in the process and a strong interaction with the social infrastructure of the school itself. The student teacher feels safe and able to participate fully in the learning experience. The other way of handling the practicum is to view the

experience narrowly — only a classroom experience. This experience promotes isolation, lack of communication between other staff members, and a lack of orientation to the procedures and policies of the school. Feeling alone results in the participants questioning whether they will be able to successfully understand and work through their practicum.

Paradox of Conflict

All participants recorded, as part of their everyday experiences, examples of conflict in the practicum. Conflict included: a discrepancy between the choice of methodology of the participant and the cooperating teacher; a misunderstanding between the student teacher and a pupil; incongruently between the course requirements, the classroom expectations and the classroom reality. The participants, though at times uncomfortable in these situations, viewed conflict as part of the learning process.

A paradox is a statement that contains an element that is contradictory to commonly accepted beliefs. Within the study the paradox emerged as conflict was seen as a catalyst for change. The participants felt that by working through a difficult situation they were able to understand the complexity of the teaching process; "As I summarize every day: this practicum really is benefiting me greatly as painful as it is" (Ariel).

The practicum provided the foundation for exploring the many facets of teaching. An impasse encouraged the student teacher to focus on all aspects of the conflict, decide how to deal with it and reflect on how it related to themselves and their experiences.

Conflict and subsequent pain were integral to the process of becoming a teacher. As the student teachers encountered conflict, their belief patterns and philosophies were challenged. For the participants the category, paradox of conflict, was constructed by the following subcategories: 1) precursors of conflict; 2) description of conflict; 3) role of conflict.

Precursors of conflict

Precursors of conflict are defined as independent influences in the environment whose interactions create conflict. The participants cited examples of reoccurring conflict precursors. Some of these examples included, school interests or university programs, such as relationships with individual students, members of the staff, and/or faculty consultants.

The most commonly mentioned conflict precursor was the expectation of the university versus the realities of the classroom. The attempt of the student teacher to balance what they perceived as a university expectation; that is the application of educational theory and the classroom implementation of the theory caused significant conflict. Participants stated that the theoretical focus of their college courses on issues in practice often did not match the expectations of their cooperating teachers. This incongruence set the groundwork for conflict.

Given the potential of the pre-practicum preparatory experience to create conflict between the student teachers, the cooperating teacher, and other members of the staff, it was not surprising to find this paradox of conflict affirmed. As precursors of conflict, any incident of contention caused them to re-evaluate and critically work through their own choice of methods.

Classes on how to take your...content material and make up lesson plans, you don't have that...you don't know how, they give you all these theories but to incorporate them I'd have to go back to my textbook and get this theory and go step by step through it with the content and see if it would fit. (Marie)

The conflict between what Marie knew and what was expected of her motivated her to develop and formulate a personal approach for dealing with lesson plans.

Larry had a different concern. Larry saw the educational field practice as a potential problem:

...because I think I knew what I was doing, I was probably comfortable and there was no real trouble. But you know if there had been a (student) teacher who was borderline...I think he easily could have slipped through (Larry).

If problems arose no-one would have known, caught the mistake, or have provided the support necessary to solve the problem. Supervision was lacking as no one was observing his teaching. The perception of a poorly planned system developed into an independent precursor for conflict.

For each participant conflict was accepted as part of the learning process. "I guess no-one can really make a practicum much easier — it's like the pain of being initiated in a club. It's something you have to go through I guess (Ariel)."

Descriptions of conflict

The practicum involves experiencing the paradox of conflict. The student teachers described the elements of conflict within the context of the classroom and the practicum experience. Examples of conflict were typically linked to a negative situation or a case that involved a point of contention between the members of the school community. Conflict influenced the process itself, the personnel of the process and the student teachers' orientation to the process.

Ariel described a reoccurring pattern of conflict in her experience. As she entered the classroom experience, she was placed in a situation where she questioned the validity of trying out some of her own ideas and techniques: there was no room for student teacher experimentation and no room for trying various approaches. As she became aware of incongruent elements between CT's methods and theory, Ariel was caught in a triangular relationship. It was the contradiction in the expectations and the objectives that created the setting for conflict:

I still face the problem of whether to "teach" like my cooperating teacher does or like my lesson plans tell me (as well as my supervisor). My teacher sometimes just passes out worksheets for a class with no introduction, anticipatory setting, objectives, procedures, conclusion. This way is how I'm supposed to do it, but it seems very technical compared to her lax method. I just feel restrained. I'd like to just take over, scrap the supervision and written observation and really get into teaching. There's so much I'd like to do. (Ariel)

Larry's conflict is more with his lack of knowledge of the subject matter than methodological. Although there were situational conflicts, the majority of Larry's examples of conflict deal with his relationship to the subject matter. "Speaking of material and test I have also come to the realization that I don't really know the material I am teaching...I don't know if I took the same material they are but I do know that I never took any of this in college." His conflict involves questioning whether he even knows the material enough to teach others. It's beyond teaching methods and practices; it involves the actual knowledge itself and his perceptions of expectations and his abilities.

It bothers me that teacher[s] are being sent out to teach and are having to learn what they are teaching. I probably will not use much of my college history classes to teach High School. (Larry)

Conflict took on many forms, either internal or external. All members of the study noted that conflict was an active part of their practicum process.

Role of Conflict

The role of conflict, within the participant's own experience, created a condition that pushed the participants to solidify their own understanding and interpretation of the practicum. In turn, this experience encouraged the student teachers to come to terms with their own methodology and classroom skills. Out of conflict came growth.

For some participants conflict challenged their view of teaching and learning. Ariel, after a math lesson, grappled with the premise of her methodology. She noted in her journal the conflict regarding her view of teaching and learning:

Do I teach them to memorize a formula without any understanding of it? Teach them the meaning years later when they are more mentally mature? Or expose them several times to it hoping it will click after a while? We study psychology in college but I don't remember studying math and maturity. (Ariel)

This level of reflection was precipitated by the conflict felt as a result of the lesson. From the conflict came an opportunity to assess her underlying assumptions about learning in the classroom.

Conflict motivated Larry to question his goals and objectives and what he wanted to do in the classroom. As his practicum experience continued, he received feedback from some of his students and attributed this to changes he made in response to the conflict.

Today I had some students say that since I have taught they have covered more work than the rest of the year with my supervisor teacher. I think that is good, I knew not much got done when I observed so I wanted to correct that when I taught and I guess I was successful. (Larry)

Out of the conflict between the different beliefs and value systems he was witnessing, Larry challenged his own motives for being in the teaching profession. Larry documented his experience by first saying that the process "didn't cause me to want to teach more, like a lot more but it made me more favorable towards it." This may not seem significant but it was this experience that caused him to comment on his perception of his ability to function in the classroom.

...I probably changed more towards the end. I went in there with the attitude thinking that I would probably never teach but I came out with the attitude that I could teach if I wanted to and do well at it. (Larry)

The paradox of conflict suggests that by working through the issues of conflict the student teachers feel empowered by the process. As the conflict was experienced, it provided the opportunity to safely question one's beliefs and perceptions. Coming through a period of difficulty paves the way for understanding the dynamics of the practicum experience. Grounding in the program, a re-assessment of attitudes and beliefs, an acknowledgment of one's aptitude, conflict became a toll of the process.

The Political Arena of the Practicum

Another category emerging from the data is the role of politics (power) in the practicum process. Although not initially labelling these instances or situations as an issue of power in the classroom, the student teachers were cognizant of a political structure, a type of an arena, in which they were expected to perform. The student teachers described this political system by referring to events that could be labelled as the political arena's (process)

contact points. These are characterized by a multitude of influences, formal or informal policies, and decision-making practices that characterize the practicum. Each member of the practicum has her/his own set of goals or objectives that combine to create the arena. In the process of reflecting upon their experience and identifying examples, the student teachers were able to describe their experience inside the political arena — the practicum.

The participants defined the political arena by dealing with the following events: 1) choice in the classroom; 2) the non-equipollent relationship between school and university; 3) recommended changes to the system. Influenced by the process, the participants noted situations that involved examples of themselves coming in contact with the process contact points within the political system.

Choice in the Classroom

Perhaps the more commonly cited example of participation within the political arena was the issue of choice in the classroom. The participants, with varying degrees of intensity, felt the practicum was structured within political boundaries, boundaries not accessible to their position as a student teacher. Articulating their feelings, the participants described their concern by noting in their journal entries such phrases as "... this wasn't my choice" (Ariel), "...it was just a student teacher sort of thing" (Larry). As a picture of the political system began to be drawn, the category of choice emerged as a central element.

As the practicum began, two of the participants (Larry and Ariel) felt the issue of control was precipitated by a lack of choice within the classroom. Larry and Ariel felt the issue of choice equated with a personal lack of input and control over the process. "...he (*faculty consultant*) said I should be teaching whatever she (ct) was teaching — that it was up to her. I think this is totally unreasonable and unfair."(Ariel) She felt this went against the goals of the program. All participants felt a loss of control and that they experienced a lack of respect within the program's structure. Choice in the classroom became more an issue of choice and control in the total structure.

Two of the three student teachers also documented specific circumstances in which they felt their experiences were defined more by a lack of choice, whether internally or externally imposed, than by their interaction with the program. This construct shaped their perceptions, making the political arena seem real. They perceived that choice was an issue in both the technical and the practical components of the teacher education process. In the university the student teacher has very little to no control over what is being learned. This lack of input continues in the classroom with little or no say on what is being taught or what methods are being used.

Table 6: Choice in the Classroom

Participant	Ariel	Larry	Marie
Subject: Choice in the Classroom	• Why is there a choice given to a teacher when hiring but not when training. Are we below the dignity of a professional while trying to be one? • I've come to the conclusion that being a student teacher is more like a substitute teacher than a homeroom teacher. You are following someone else's rules to play your game.	• I think as a student teacher you just don't quite have that freedom. I don't think that will ever change (program set-up). • Even though I had that freedom, I probably wouldn't have taken that freedom...it was just the student teacher type of thing.	• I don't know, there were just little things and suddenly it is like can I change this whole classroom around and I would like to teach it this way. You know but you don't say that but I would make suggestions to him.

Ariel and Larry felt their experiences were limited by the political constraints and were unable to provide them with an adequate introduction to the demands of teaching. The journal entries support the conclusion that the process of orientating one's self to the practicum, contextual grounding, did not develop between the student teacher and the practicum process. Lack of choice and no control in the practicum left Ariel questioning whether she could accomplish what she had set out to do.

Marie acknowledged that she, too, felt the effects of a political arena. Marie's specific case dealt with her perception of a system that affected the way she approached classroom issues. Although there was the desire to implement her own methods and techniques, her perception of the system dictated what would be acceptable.

In Marie's acknowledgment of the routines of the classroom and her "street wise" approach when took in relating to her cooperating teacher and his classroom, there is recognition of the political arena in the program. This attitude, combined with the issue of choice, began to define her role.

Marie began her practicum with the assumption that she would model the pattern set by her cooperating teacher. Her ability to choose was voluntarily limited as she felt it would be in her best interests to continue with the pre-set pattern. As her practicum progressed, so did her approach to the practicum:

I always figured I'm going to mimic the teacher at first and keep the students in their routine and maybe they'll get use to me and then, but then I started not liking his way and I could see better ways to do things that I thought could work better. (Marie)

As the issue of choice became more apparent, the skeletal framework of the political arena was emerging. The information gathered from the data pointed out that the student teachers recognized this same framework while working through the other aspects of the practicum program. As the reality of the political arena influenced the student teacher, the context of their experience expanded to include aspects of the field experience outside of the actual classroom, beyond the theory taught in diversity.

Non-equipollent Relationship between School and University

Within the practicum experience the working relationship of the school and the university functions in a preset yet amicable arrangement. Although each institution utilizes its individual resources, provides access to different support services and independently meets at different locations, they strive to accomplish the practicum's program objective of teacher training to the best of their ability.

To be equipollent, the two institutions must participate in and share the same vision and goals. From the data, apparently, this was not the case for the student teachers involved the practicum process. The relationship between the school and university demonstrated apparent organizational and philosophical differences as the student teachers were introduced to the political structure and constraints of the classroom.

The student teachers felt caught in a system with an apparent lack of continuity and political disparity of goals and objectives of the two institutions. Although the goal of a trained teacher was held by both entities, the methods and philosophies were vastly different. The student teachers interpreted this difference as a lack of continuity in the process and found themselves unable to deal with and within the political demands of each. The resulting effect was one of confusion and instability. As they participated within the political arena it was their perception that they must successfully meet the expectations of each shareholder.

Table 7: Non-equipollent Relationship

Participant	Ariel	Larry	Marie
Subject: Non-equipollent Relationship	• Am I supposed to be the teacher that I learned about in college or follow along with their CT (classroom) method? • Am I supposed to do it her way or the college way? Two totally different systems and it made me uncomfortable.	• There seems to be a total lack of communication between the college and the guest school. • I probably will not use much of my college history classes to teach High School.	• Basically, if you don't know the subject matter you can't help. You know you can't answer the question and it's like I don't know. I'm just the teacher here.

The practicum's conflict between the university directives and the classroom directives directly affected the student teachers' concept of their role in the classroom:

I'm trying to think of what would make my practicum less nerve-wracking....Not knowing what is expected of me (in more detail) puts

stress on me. As I said before, not knowing if I'm supposed to follow my cooperating teacher's lead or my college education can be too confusing. (Ariel)

Larry noted the unequal stance of the systems, but rather than viewing the diversity as a catalyst for a struggle he concluded that the lack of continuity resulted from a lack of communication and an adequately organized practicum. In his journal he describes the situation:

I realized that there had been no real communication between me and any of the teachers before I got there or the school and this school, you know there was just no communication. They just kind of said show up here that day. (Larry)

Subtle yet distinct, the poorly planned facilitation Larry noted may have been a direct result of the lack of collaboration between the school and the university.

From the data, this issue of non-equipollence continued with the student teachers comparing the theory-based university system with the practical-based classroom system. There appeared to be an ever-widening gap between theory and practice. However, the student teachers felt it was up to them to bridge this educational divide.

College doesn't really prepare you to handle discipline. They give you a few vague hints and say you'll have to wait until you're in the situation. ...We were taught in college to be prepared on paper, but not prepared up here (*gesturing towards her head*). (Ariel)

The issue of an equipollent relationship continued with the student teachers' questioning the roles of the university and the school classroom. Continuing the pattern, the student teachers' questioned the validity of their university experience in relation to their direct experience in the classroom. Whether dealing with the concepts of discipline or their grasp of the content material, there appeared to be a lack of relevancy and continuity between what was taught and what the student teachers felt they were expected to maintain in the classroom situation.

Of the data collected, there was no mention of a connected nor established relationship between the classroom system and the university

system nor was there any acknowledgment that the systems were in any way interrelated.

Recommended Changes to the Practicum Program

All of the participants completed the required six weeks of their practicum. Upon reflection of the process, the student teachers recommended changes to the practicum program. Each student teacher's recommendation focused on her/his individualized concept of the experience itself, contemplating the political arena provided a unique set of parameters to work within. As the student teachers define the extent of the contact with of the political system as; 1) the issue of choice in the classroom, and 2) the existing non-equipollent relationship in the classroom, they came up with suggestions for changes or modifications within the practicum program.

At the beginning of her practicum experience, Ariel was immediately confronted with the issue of choice. She was required to teach a subject in which she had no previous training. Her lack of choice, coupled with a lack of knowledge and inexperience, intensified her feeling of helplessness exponentially. Commenting upon this situation, one can sense the urgency in her recommendation:

I made note of that partially because it frustrated me and partially because I wanted to say if anybody is out there. Please listen to a practicum student and don't give them anything like this. (Ariel)

Larry's recommendation was also triggered by his experience with a lack of choice. He is placed in a situation where he is called upon to teach outside of his specialization. "I took Secondary Education to teach High School and wish I could student teach just High School. It would be logical to teach what you are trained for." This caused him to be uncomfortable and stimulated a recommendation for change to the system:

...I have also come to the realization that I don't really know the material I am teaching. Specifically speaking I mean grade 8 and 9. I don't know if I took the same material they are doing but I do know that I never took any of this in college. I think in college there should be more classes in content area and less education classes. I would suggest replacing the education classes with content area and more

in class observing and even teaching a class once a week or for a couple days, etc. (Larry)

The student teachers also recommended changes to the other sub category of the political arena, the relationship between the university system and the classroom system. The student teachers felt that there was a need for collaboration between the two systems to make for a more effective practicum experience. By developing an earlier educational link between the two institutions, the practicum process would provide better grounding for the student teacher.

I think we could get along with less of some of the education classes. You need the classes in your major area, science or history, your content area ones, but I think you could with less of the education classes. Cause a lot of them overlap...I think they could cut out two or three of those education classes and put in classes where you are teaching. Teaching-type classes. (Larry)

The two institutions maintained systems supporting their own objectives. Participating in the practicum process created a diverse, and sometimes confusing, perception of classroom objectives. Trying to accommodate the contradiction Larry suggested that exposure to a "real classroom" before the practicum would give more credibility to the university program and provide a learning continuum:

Well, I think there should be times when you could go out and you could teach one day here or maybe observe a day and teach the next day or something more to get you into the classroom before you would go into your practicum. In a real classroom, not micro-teaching stuff. (Larry)

Self in the Practicum Experience

The internalization of an experience is difficult to assess. There is no testing device nor monitoring program that will allow a standardized procedure to determine the results or effects of the practicum experience. If we are to understand what is learned we must ask the student teacher to become the researcher as well as the research. Together, the element of self provides a source of rich and descriptive information on the practicum process and the student teacher.

The element of self in the practicum experience emerged as a triangular pattern: 1) journal writing and the role of reflection; 2) the role of feelings; and 3) the role of past experiences. Each situation relates to the way the essence (nature) of the individual interacted with the many facets of the process. Addressing this involved the student teacher recognizing and interpreting their role in the practicum experience.

Journal Writing and the Role of Reflection

As the study began, each of the participants was asked to keep a journal recording the events, their thoughts, or opinions of the practicum process. No specific direction was given regarding the type of material they were to record. Instead I encouraged the student teachers to utilize their journals however they wanted to, meeting whatever needs they had. This allowed for free exploration, facilitating self-definition of the role of reflection. Without a solid definition of what I felt reflection was or expected, the student teachers came up with their own ideas about reflection, its use and its purpose.

None of the student teachers used the term reflection in their data. The concept of reflection was dealt with in a concrete, practical manner. For example, they were comfortable with the practice of journal writing to re-think or evaluate a lesson.

Using the journal as a reflective tool provided two functions: an internal support for what s/he was doing and a reminder of the progress s/he had made. For those who felt little support from the cooperating teacher or staff in the school, such as Ariel, "probably my journal, if anything" provided her with support.

Journal writing also satisfied the need for documentation. Marie felt her experience with journal writing gave her a concrete and personal record of her first practicum experience. "Because of my journal, I won't forget what happened during this practicum." (Marie) This feature of her reflective experience was important to Marie and provided her with personal documentation of her student teaching experience.

The practices of journal writing and reflection became a valuable tools. As a result, Marie concluded that she needed to do more reflection: "The one thing I could have done more was to sit back and evaluate how the class went. I didn't do very much of that." Thinking about what she had done or how she could do a better job, a type of reflection, was important to her and may have helped to identify the context of her practicum experience.

Role of "Feelings"

The abstract subject of feelings was described by the participants in reference to several experiences in their practicum. Regardless of the specifics circumstances, the participants labelled their responses as an internal "inkling" or feeling. One participant, unable to put a label on how she knew which procedure to follow, jokingly linked it to a supernatural phenomenon. "It just happened? Ya,...I'm psychic, I was born to be a teacher." (Marie) Her ability to perform well and successfully function in the classroom situation was a result of personal, and in her opinion, spiritual predisposition towards the practicum process.

The use of an inner guidance system helped the student teacher Ariel to ground herself within the practicum process. She addressed the issue of developing her professional identity as a teacher by assessing her inner feelings:

If I feel like I am relating more to the teachers I had, than all the fellow students that I have been with, then I feel more like a teacher. I don't think that there is recipe, that they wear a suit and tie instead of a shirt and jeans or whatever. It is just when I feel I could relate more, if I could feel comfortable in the staff room, instead of the gym, then I feel like I am understanding what it is to be a teacher. (Ariel)

Her teaching identity is built upon her ability to "feel" like a teacher rather than an acquisition of skills or appropriate behaviors.

The repetitious usage of the term "feel" continues in the data collected from Marie. She related to feelings within her experience of understanding and interpreting the success of her lessons: "I felt comfortable with it and I know how things should be going. I kind of have a feeling when things are

going well and when things aren't and he mentioned stuff and I say ya I know, I felt that too, when things got out of hand."

The role of "feelings", although difficult to articulate and represent, constituted a viable, rich, and immediate source of personal information and feedback. Feelings supported the student teachers' role, possibly helping to define it, and provided an outlet for the conscious exploration of the role.

Role of Past Experiences

During the practicum experience the participants found themselves comparing classroom situations to their own personal experience, either in or beyond of the classroom. Perhaps as a grounding technique, the role of past experience provided a point of reference for the student teachers. As the participants moved through the practicum they utilized this procedure to gain a better understanding of the classroom. The role of past experience, as suggested by the student teachers, related a current situation to a point in their own history, often dealing with the very same type of issue. Utilizing and accessing this information indicated the important role of such an anchor point:

That was a critical day. I came to grips with the age group. I thought I would always like them. I thought I had remembered well enough from my time in that age group. (Ariel)

The kids really are not that bad but I cannot believe I acted like that. I am talking about my grade 11 class. I can remember grade 11. It really was not that long ago and now I cannot put myself in their place. I really cannot put their actions in the picture I have of grade 11. My only conclusion can be that I was incredibly mature for grade 11. Well I doubt that, I guess five years can really make a huge difference. (Larry)

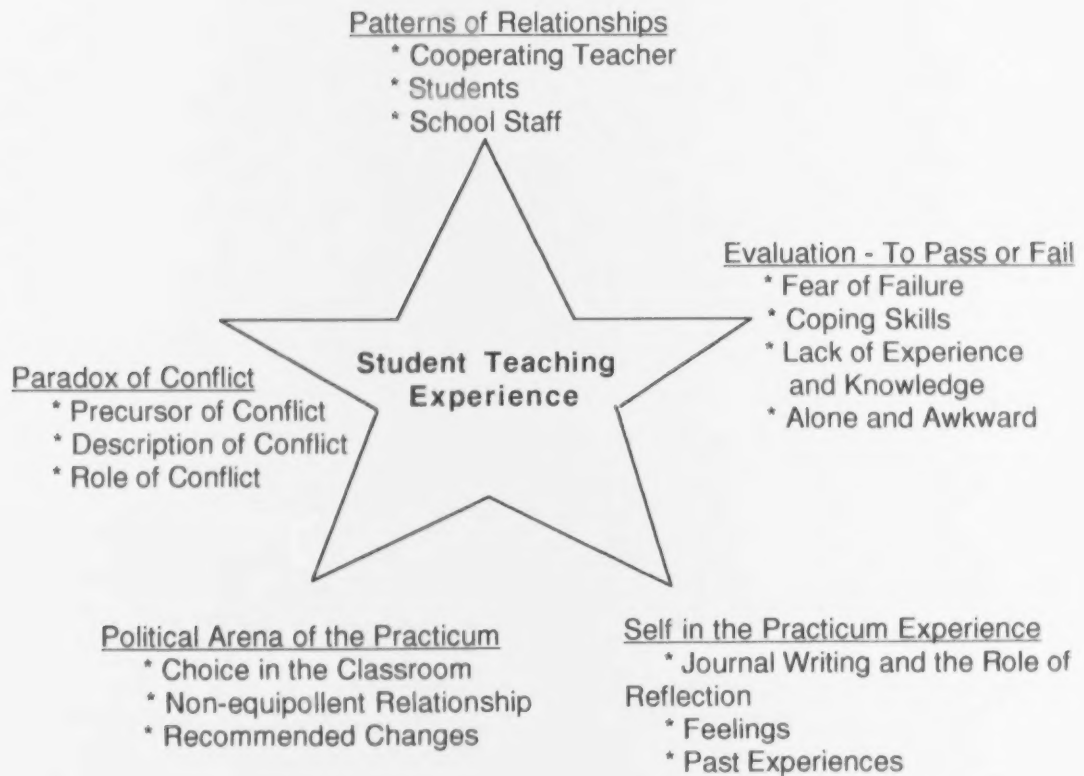
The practicum continued to provide experiences that related easily to past experience. As the student teachers became more involved in this process they recognized their past experience as rationale for their own behavior and developed a sense of continuity in their own learning experience. Larry reiterates the theme of continuity as he draws a direct link between his role as a student to his new role as a teacher:

Well I think, being a student reflects how you are going to be as a teacher because every teacher affects you somewhere. That definitely affects me and that's basically why some of my classes there is lots of discussion, they are quite open, as long as there is order kept, they can say anything they wish.

What one experienced in the classroom of their past provided a source of information, a past experience & theory and practical grounding, that was broadened as the participants' experienced the practicum process. They moved from an immediate view of classroom teaching and the student body to incorporate their past experiences and develop a more intense picture that included complex, diverse, and an inclusive continuum of teaching and learning.

Figure 4.1

Outline of Findings



CHAPTER FIVE

ANALYSIS

Introduction

We are made witness to the drama, indeed the agon, of human beings constructing their identities as teachers in situations marked by tension between what seems given or unalterable and what may be perceived as possibility. (Britzman, 1991, p. ix)

The practicum component is a vital part of the teacher education program. Despite all the research on student teachers and the many facets of the practicum program, it is difficult to be precise about the nature of how teachers learn to teach. During this practical period student teacher test their knowledge and their skills, incorporate past experiences with present realities, and strive to understand the total whole/sum concept of being a teacher. As part of the teacher education program, the practicum becomes the final test.

As the different types of issues and ideas began to emerge, I feel I was a spectator at the finish line of a race. Each of the student teachers was a runner in that race. Each having learned the rules of running the race: such as staying in their own lanes; avoiding interference with the other runners; avoiding false starts and most importantly, to run the best race they could. As each crossed over the finish line, the participants waited to see their time and their placement. Each participant was sweating and breathing hard: the race had required an expenditure of energy and effort. They looked at themselves and each other, reflecting upon own their own effort and their own needs, and recognized the purpose of practice and preparation. Most importantly, they recognized they could run and that they ran well enough to finish the race. Yes, there was a transformation; a change from the one who practices and studies the basics of running to one who participates in the race and crosses the finish line.

Following this metaphor, the practicum experience creates a safe opportunity to embrace the fullness of the teaching process. It bridged the gap between student and teacher. Invaluable and irreplaceable, the practicum experience is as vital to the student teachers' professional development and identity as running the race is to the sprinter. All the hard work, endless effort and strict academic discipline culminate within the practicum experience.

Patterns of Relationships

The accounts of people's changing relationships to one another, to language and to power, may lead to new events in our own understanding. (Britzman, 1991, p. x)

As the education student teacher enters into the field experience, s/he immediately comes in contact with the members of the school community. This interaction necessarily involves introducing and establishing one's own identity in response to the circumstances of the relationship. The development of self, within the context of the classroom, is an essential part of the evolution of the neophyte teacher. Whether the student teacher is relating to a member of the school board or the president of the chess club, the evolvment and understanding of the student teacher's role and identity is facilitated by the development of interpersonal relationships (socialization).

The socialization element of the practicum process establishes a precedent for the acculturation of the student teacher into the school culture. As the practicum begins to unfold, so do the roles of the many people involved in the process. Striving to become part of and identify with the teaching profession the student teacher interacts with all members of the school community and to establish her/his own way of relating to each person. Patterns of relationships begin to outline the inherent social structure found in the school, thereby conveying a sense of the role each member has in supporting the classroom.

The phenomenon of socialization actualizes as student teachers become aware of their response mechanisms to the identification and

development of relationship patterns. Interpretations or internalization of the student teachers' role in relationship to other members of the school community exposes just how many potential levels of interaction are possible and re-emphasizes the complexity of the socialization process.

Socialization is an inherent aspect of the practicum experience. Whether the student teachers' experience of socialization was of a positive or negative nature is inconsequential to the fact that patterns of relationships were established. Any interactive process contains potential for the formation of a less than amicable relationship. By placing their response to the other members of the practicum within a professional domain, the volatility lessened and their emotional response minimized. Discovery of the working dynamics of the classroom takes a higher priority than responding to the dynamics themselves.

Figure 5.1 and Figure 5.2 represent my analysis of the characteristics of relationships in the school as interpreted from the data finding and the literature.

Figure 5:1

Relating to the Cooperating Teacher

Positive Pattern	Negative Pattern
• sharing of ideas • sharing of responsibilities • an inclusive process • promoted socialization • ST felt safe • supportive environment • positive role model • facilitated transfer of information • valuable feedback • encouraged to experiment and try out new ideas	• lack of feedback • isolated (little socialization) • limited or no communication • expected to imitate not initiate • limited transferability of ability/skills to classroom expectations • power struggle between CT and ST • lack of specific and defined goals and expectations • inability or lack of freedom to utilize personal ideas • confusing expectation messages

Figures 5.1 and 5.2 depict a continual listing of the patterns emerging from interaction with both their cooperating teacher and the school staff. As the list demonstrates, the positive patterns were found to encourage the student teacher to implement their own classroom strategies and experiment with new methods. Grounding in the classroom context was facilitated within a classroom that represented a supportive environment. Socialization was not forced by strict adherence to a status quo but guided by an inclusive, mentoring relationship with significant people in the profession.

Figure 5:2

Relating to the school staff

Positive Pattern	Negative Pattern
• positive interpersonal relationship • enriching • interactive • two-way communication, aiding in the professional development of all members • provide valuable feedback • non-threatening relationship • sharing resources	• negative or no relationship • promote ST's perception of instability • contribute to ST's question of professional credibility • non-interactive • competitive • lack of communication and recognition • abuse of power

Negative patterns resulted from following pre-set or traditional formats and procedures. The student teachers noted many examples of negative patterns, both formal, nonformal and informal. As the list shows, little emphasis is placed on sharing ideas or addressing the effectiveness of other methods. The student teacher feels pressure to abandon her/his own ideas and follow the other member's initiatives. Socialization is an introduction to the political and hierarchical structure of the school community.

Clarity of the patterns of relationships crystallizes with subsequent participation in the process. The more time and energy spent emerging oneself in the context of the classroom and the school, the more solid relationships between the school staff and the student teacher became. Each relationship, then, begins to play a role in their field experience and the practicum process incorporates the hue of a broader learning experience.

Working with school staff and participating in the school community facilitates another essential component of the practicum experience — the development of the student teacher's professional identity. As with any culture, it is the members of the community that give definition to the identity of the group. Physical surroundings, theoretical backgrounds, and shared knowledge are all essential features of the group's configuration. Interaction with members of the culture and the subsequent developing patterns of relationships confirms the basic ideology and premise of the school community. As the student teacher participates within the practicum experience, her/his role is constantly changing to reflect her/his perception of the teaching profession.

To be identified as a member of the teaching profession becomes very important to the student teachers. With this new identity comes the sense of completion, a perception of bridging a developmental divide. The process of developing a relationship with the members of each school community is the first stage of the practicum experience. More important than developing lesson plans or maintaining classroom control is the ability to interact and identify with the teaching profession. Physically, socially and psychologically, the mantle of teaching is being passed to the student teachers prior to their participation in the actual classroom.

Professional identity becomes synonymous with stability. Therefore, interaction with the other members (staff, students, cooperating teacher, etc.) encouraged the student teacher to define her/his role in the classroom. As the student teacher grounds self in the practicum process s/he develops an interpretation of her/his role in the classroom. Securing the professional identity creates a commonality with the other members of the practicum. If

the student teachers feel as if they are a part of the school community, issues, conflicts and areas of concern can be approached from a collective base of information rather than as an isolated source of interpretive assessment.

Developing a relationship with the individual members involved in the practicum provides the student teacher with the opportunity to access support systems. As the student teachers begin to identify with the members of the school community, they are able access the expertise, information and knowledge of the group. The type of support available can be formal, as in a staff meeting, or informal, perhaps talking with students in the lunch room. Such relationships become a valuable source of information. Although not all relationships are positive, each interaction holds the potential to provide the student teacher with first hand information regarding the realities of working in the school system.

Socialization facilitates acculturation within the school community, an essential first step in working through the practicum experience. The complexity of the program, in combination with political and process ambiguity, creates a system of hurdles that the student teacher must safely navigate. Socialization, formatting one's professional and communal identity, and the securing a reliable source of information all allows the student teacher to devise a workable strategy to help with the successful completion of her/his field experience.

Evaluation - Pass or Fail

Evaluation is a powerful concept. It has the ability to inspire some to achieve great and difficult goals; for others it becomes a debilitating force, crippling efforts and strangling dreams. As each participant became involved in the practicum process, there emerged an awareness of the importance of understanding and addressing the evaluative context of the practicum experience.

The primary objective of field experience in teacher education is to determine if the student teacher can adequately participate in and maintain a classroom situation. As in any profession, teaching relies on the precept

that there is a universal standard within the education process to judge candidates by. As student teachers enter the classroom, meeting this standard or "making the grade" becomes their main concern. It is within this objective that practicum experiences revolve.

An area of concern is the fluctuating nature of the evaluation process. The standard by which student teachers are being judged is relative to those who are doing the judging. With each shareholders focusing on their own needs, the student teacher is kept in a state of perpetual observation. Every action and response carries the potential to influence the evaluations. It is from this picture the student teacher will be evaluated and, eventually, awarded a grade. The student teacher quickly becomes aware of the poignancy of evaluation and grades. S/he responds by modifying her/his own philosophy and methodology, according to the demands of the evaluator. This may be as subtle as changing the pronunciation of a word or as extreme as denying personal values and beliefs in order to make the grade.

Understandably, evaluation in the practicum is a complex and complicated issue. Although there is a set list of requirements for obtaining a successful completion of the practicum, the shareholders have a similar type of list dealing specifically with their own goals and objectives. As the student teacher enters into the program, s/he discovers the extent to which meeting the requirements have gone. No longer is the process a reflection of her/his personal achievements; it is now a reflection of how well they are able to meet the requirements of the individual shareholders in the process.

Every aspect of the practicum process contained an evaluative value. This construct permeates the internal processing and external manifestations of the student teacher. As the participants experience the practicum, they become aware of the effect that each of their actions may have on the outcome of their program. Effort is made to become aware of and acquaint themselves with the formal and informal requirements of each segment of the practicum process. Within the scope of evaluation, the experience of the student teacher is compartmentalized, explored from every possible angle by each representative of the process. The internal, informal practices of the practicum are not readily observable and take considerably

greater amounts of time and effort to interpret and relate to. They do not subscribe to a checklist mentality nor do they facilitate readily accessible accountability.

The external element focuses on the movement of the student teacher within the process. Classroom management, lesson plans, and professional conduct are examples of external elements having evaluative value. These elements are evaluated by watching the student teacher, looking at materials and communicating with other members of the program who have contact with her/him. External elements are easy to document, more conducive to a specific objective or goal list.

The evaluation process mirrors the dualistic nature of the student teacher's experience by utilizing and promoting a complex grading procedure. The external elements are formally established and are plainly documented. The internal elements are also established but are informally imposed and sometimes part of a hidden agenda. The student teacher has the dual task of coming to terms with the informal and potentially hidden requirements of the program. They must recognize, acknowledge, and interpret these objectives and their own informal responses to and expectations of the practicum process.

Evaluation permeates the totality of the practicum experience and the student teacher reacts to its ever presence. For the student teacher to work through the evaluative nature of each exercise and continue on, is a true, perhaps brutal, test of survival in the classroom. Evaluation exposes the raw side of the practicum experience, giving context to both the negative and the positive dimensions of classroom reality.

To work through this step, the student teacher works on displaying the type of response that indicates fulfilling the competency-based evaluation format. Internal elements of the process, although very valuable to the totality of the process, include reflectivity or feelings resulting from dealing with stress of the classroom. Any abstract or affective dimension of the practicum falls into this category of evaluation. The objectives and requirements which deal with a more affective branch are often substantiated by secondary, external behaviors. To ascertain whether the student teacher is working

within the parameters of these practicum's objectives requires contact and extended periods of interaction with the evaluator.

Paradox of Conflict

The practicum experience invites student teachers to enter the next dimension of their educational training. In the classroom the student teacher is exposed to the known and the unknown, the established and the unstable, and each step and stage incorporates new territory, unexplored avenues, and unfamiliar procedures. As the student teacher begins to work in the unfamiliarity of the classroom, the paradox of conflict begins to emerge.

The inclusive nature of the practicum process creates the circumstances contributing to the exposure of unfamiliar experiences to the student teacher. Unaccustomed to the demands of the classroom experience, situations of difficulty or conflict introduce a new dimension to the student teacher's learning experience. Coming into contact with conflict triggers a pattern of responses: the problem(s) invites the learner to assess the situation, contextualize it, and uncover how it affects and relates to them in their practicum experience and then to respond to it. Not all of the participants responded; some only have the necessary skills to labor through a specific stage. The student teachers are faced with the expectation of dealing with any discrepancy that occurs between their perception of the conflict, the issue of conflict itself and their involvement in it.

Every facet of the practicum holds the potential to create conflict and usually does. Conflict comes in many shapes and forms, either self-imposed or imposed by others involved in the process, individually or institutionally based. Conflict ranges from: simple misunderstandings to complex communication problems; errors in lesson planning to misrepresentation of subject matter; classroom noise to classroom chaos. Conflict is not gender biased in that one sex has a better chance at a successful handling of conflict situations. Working in the school system provides the student teacher with many opportunities to encounter and experience conflict. The very nature of conflict in the learning process causes the student teacher to question not only what they are experiencing but what factors have contributed to the situation. This exploration triggers new areas of the

learning process. As each of the student teachers encounters conflict, they also enter into a potential period of growth.

Conflict becomes paradoxical in nature: As the student teacher faced the question of how to deal with the issue of conflict in their field experience, they worked through a multitude of other issues surrounding the conflict concept. The ability to interpret, understand and work through problems of the practicum becomes a vital part of the process. Conflict provides the opportunity for student teachers to solidify their interpretation and philosophies. As much as the conflict created an uneasy situation, it also provided the impetus necessary for the student teachers to re-evaluate their concept of teaching and learning. Here in lies the paradox: although conflict is what they want to avoid the most it also provides them with the greatest learning opportunities.

The student teacher contextualizes the reality of the classroom situation. They begin to ask relevant and thought provoking questions: What circumstances have combined to create the environment necessary for this type of conflict?; What has contributed to my own understanding that allowed me to respond to the conflict in the manner that I did?. Re-thinking the role of conflict frees up the learning experience, moving beyond the superficial right versus wrong paradigm and encourages an awareness of the experiential totality of the practicum process.

Political Arena of the Practicum

The field experience program is a result of a multi-partied investment; the school community, the university institute, and the cooperating teacher. Each member, has a vested interest and contributes experience, expertise and resources to the practicum program. Under the organizational umbrella of facilitating the teacher education process, all involved make a separate contribution in the form of experience and expertise that collectively define the practicum program.

The practicum encourages the student teachers to work on formulating their personal understanding of the process and of themselves in the context to their classroom involvement. Struggling to put the many

pieces of the teacher education puzzle together, the participants experiment with many theories and approaches to find the right combination. A highly personalized process, the student teachers concentrate on defining their role within the educational organization. At this point the participants are conscious of the need to move beyond the student role and into the teacher role. Experimentation demands that their previous beliefs and assumptions be questioned. Pushing at their personal boundaries precipitates the student teachers identifying and questioning the organizational parameters within the practicum experience.

The assemblage of the parties begins to resemble an arena. It is important to recognize that each contributing member also brings into the program their own goals, objectives, philosophies, and methodologies, each of which serve to define the political nature of this arena. Each member has an opinion as how to best facilitate the teacher education process and contributes their unique political perspective to the overall purpose of the practicum program.

As the student teacher participates in the classroom, s/he becomes aware of a multi-dimensional system of requirements and objectives. Upon attempting to implement their own policies and procedures the student teachers face the reality that the other members of their field experience also have policies and procedures that are actively involved. Construction of one's own interpretation of the teaching experience is influenced by one or all of the components of the practicum process. Although it is expected that the student teacher will question the procedures of the classroom, the extent to which these procedures will affect her/his development is not addressed.

Although the student teacher actively participates in the classroom, they have little or no prior experience with the political and power boundaries that define the practicum. Without an introduction to the political protocol of the practicum process, the student teacher is unaware of the expectations of or the extensive influence of the political arena. Every action and activity steps into a collective mire of the expectations, goals and objectives of the shareholders. As the student teacher enters the classroom, they become party to this multi-member mission. Working through the

experience and achieving a successful completion rests on their ability to address the political agenda of each member of the practicum structure.

As the student teachers enter the practicum process, they begin to move within this political arena, defined by the process-oriented and political interests of those involved in the teacher education program. The role of the student teacher is to work within the composite design of the context and be able to interpret, understand and fulfill the diversity of each party's requirements.

Figure 5.3

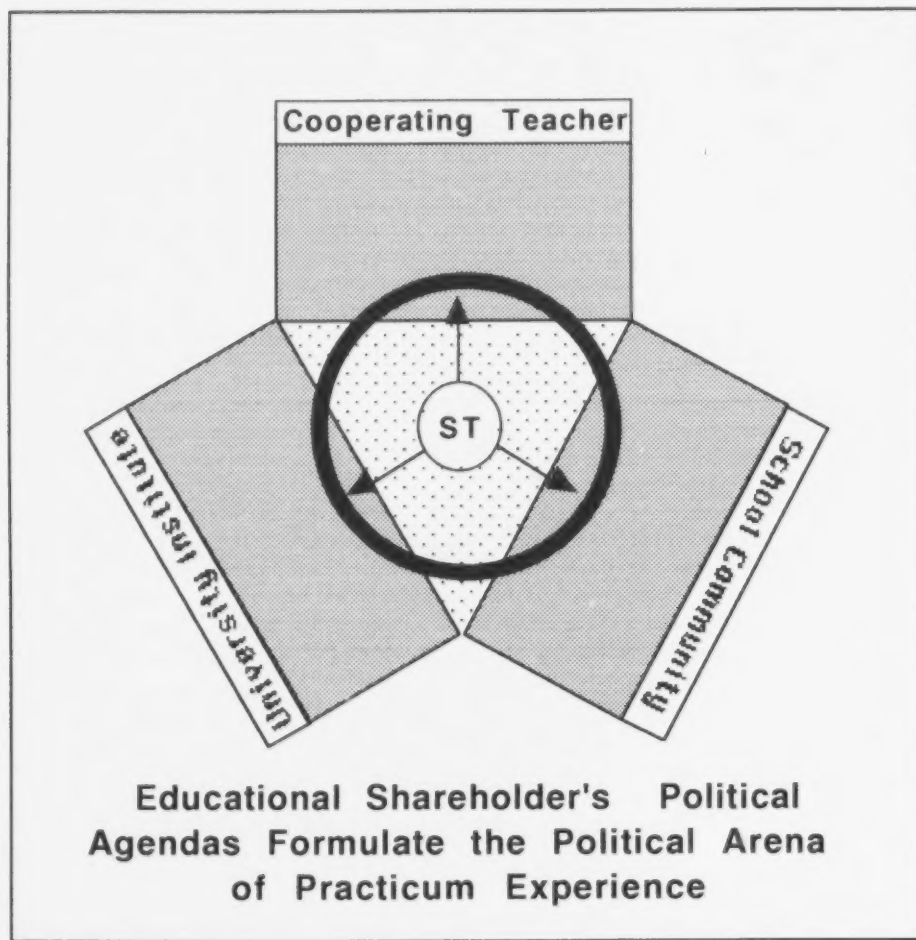
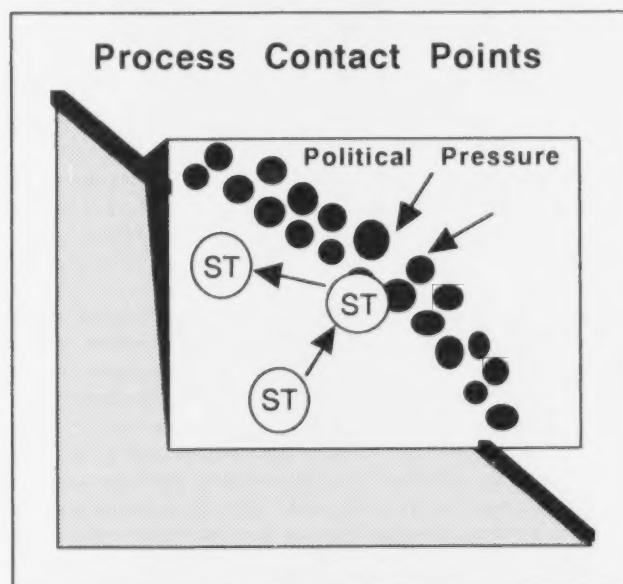


Figure 5.3 shows how the interaction between the student teacher and the major shareholders contributes to the arena motif. As the student teachers participate in the classroom experience, they move among the different agendas, objectives and goals. There is no specific direction, only that the student teacher will come in contact with and experience the politically defined arena.

The political arena is made up of contact points. Every action and reaction of the student teacher has the capacity of coming up against the boundaries of the political arena. For example, in implementing a classroom management strategy, the student teacher interacts in the classroom. At this juncture, the contact point can be a guiding force, providing suggestions for change but allowing the student teacher to maintain control of the situation. Or the political contact can be like hitting a wall: the student teacher is also redirected, but in the process may completely lose the sense of direction and control of the learning experience (See Figure 5.4).

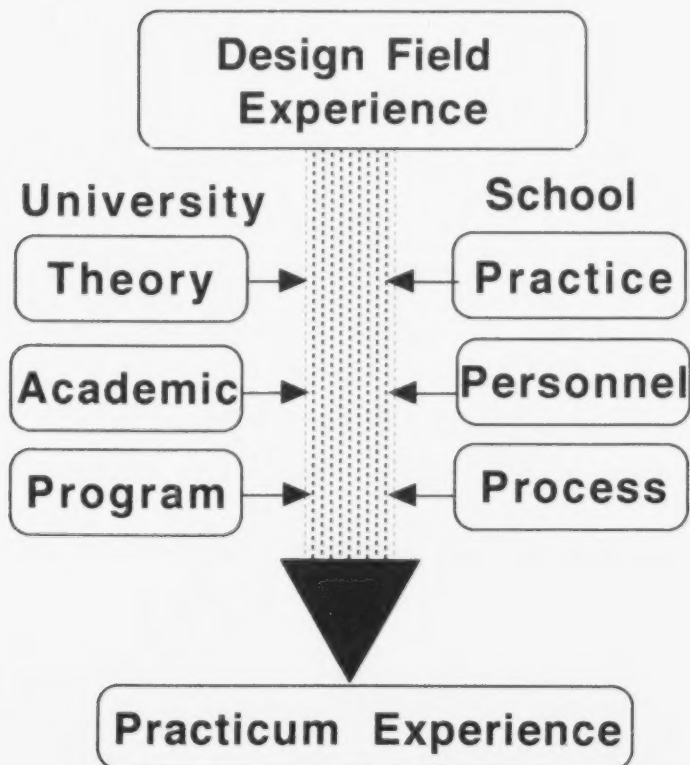
Figure 5.4



As the effect of the contact points becomes recognized, the student teacher begins to re-direct their energies to a more efficient use of personal resources, avoiding negative experiences.

Organizational parameters manipulate relationships as well as teaching strategies. Each member of the practicum process function within the political arena and is just as susceptible to being influenced by the requirements and objectives of the other parties as the student teacher is. The partnership between the teaching university and the host school is often under question. In Figure 5.5 the relationship between what is learned and what is experienced in the practicum provides a tension and political climate that is fixed on political polarity.

Figure 5.5



As the student teacher moves away from the university setting and into the classroom, blatant discrepancies of classroom reality developed. The student teachers' experience demonstrates that an equality among themselves and their cooperating teachers is non-existent and that the lack of cohesiveness or collaboration creates a disparity of intent. The apparent lack of cohesiveness in philosophies and objectives served only to accentuate the political volatility of the classroom. Contrary objectives, philosophies, methods and interpretation of goals in the process creates a cycle of where the student teacher was caught between theory in the university course work and the practice in the classroom.

Voicing their opinion the student teachers conceptualizes the political reality of the classroom. They describe the political arena using examples of a lack of control, the inability to influence the program, restricting the internalization of the process or the prevention of the student teacher to ground in her/his experience. At times the participants voluntarily chooses to limit their own control to best facilitate their role in the classroom. By experiencing difficulties as a result of the contact points of the political arena, the participants recommend changes to the practicum program. Charge is viewed as a method of dealing with the larger picture rather than affecting specific facets of the process.

Role of Self

Examining the journals and the interviews of each participant, I was introduced to the phenomenon of the student teacher's interaction with her/his inner self. In the practicum process one can not take away from the fact the student teacher must fulfill the dual role of being both the teacher and the student learning the profession. By examining the external elements of their performance in the process, the traditional approach to evaluation assumes that the external elements are an indicator of the internal elements. Hence, it also assumes there is an understanding of the internal processing that is taking place. Perhaps, through observing a successful classroom lesson or noticing the efficient lesson plans, all may interpret these achievements as an accurate indication of the internal process. External characteristics may convey a specific inclination or represent mastery of a

skill but only through exploration of the internal processing or inner person can growth be holisitically defined. The creative process of learning to teach moves beyond the display of proper skills and behaviors to incorporate the interactive or "creating" stage of the practicum process. By examining the primary role of self, the program changed from a lesson in experience to experiencing a lesson.

In the journals they were able to freely relate their experience with the total practicum experience. In essence they became active members of the research team. The student teacher was included in the process of seeking out both answers to the research questions and an understanding of what those answers meant in relation to their own experience. Reflection emerged as a natural byproduct of the self-exploration of their experience. The role of self, their new role of being the researcher rather than simply the research introduced a vital aspect to the dimension of educational understanding and foundation — the affective or internal domain of learning.

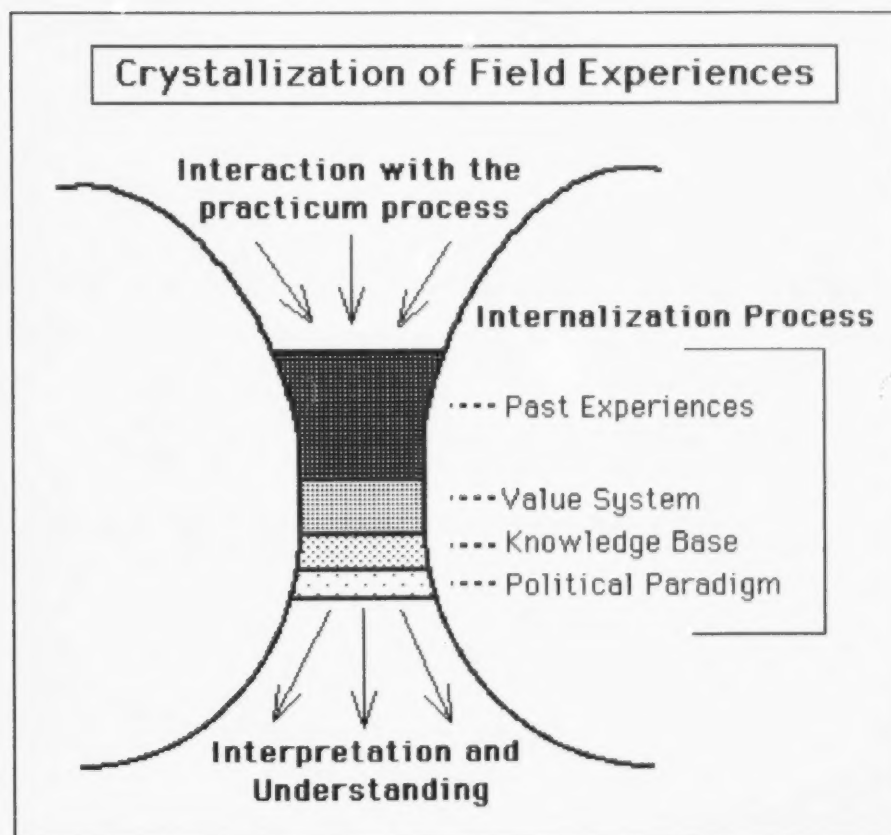
As members of the practicum experience and a member of the research team, the student teachers were given the opportunity to address issues that were of importance to them and directly affected the result of their field experience efforts. Without the role of self, the student teachers would be involved in a process composed of external agendas, with little focus on their own rich and valuable source of input. It could be characterized by the effect of being on the outside looking in, and, in this case, being judged on their perception of what is going on inside.

Recognizing the usefulness and validity of the student teacher's learning experiences contributes to the development of their personal platform. "By becoming aware of the perspective by which we operate, we can at least become sensitive to the basis for our own approach to teaching, and, at best, become capable of changing our approach as we gain both new ideas and new teaching experiences." (Posner, 1993, p. 29) As researchers, the student teachers sift through the remnants of their previous learning experiences and identify, re-examining, their perceptions in relation to current perspectives on teaching. Personal philosophies and belief systems developed as a result of or as a culmination of the many

experiences that the student teachers have participated through-out their lives.

As the student teachers worked through their practicum, past experiences became a grounding point, giving a context for learning within the practicum process. They also served in the capacity of an anchor, a point of reference from which a student teacher could address new concepts and process different types of responses safely without fear of losing their own perspective. Working through one's interpretative filters ensures that the internal identity or value system is not confused with or dominated by other identities or value systems of those involved in the practicum set-up. (See figure 5:6)

Figure 5:6



Making a connection between their own experiences and their situation in the practicum process facilitated a deeper understanding of the practicum and preserved the continuum of the learning process. The validation of their experience and maintaining the integrity of their own belief/value system, student teachers were encouraged full participation in the learning experience.

Self also contributed an alternate way of interpreting what is happening in the practicum. Past experiences facilitated a sense of continuum in the student teachers' learning experience. Encouraging the student teachers to identify and address their past experiences in the classroom and draw a correlation to what they were encountering in the process gave them a sense of stability. As the student teachers continued to refer back to past examples, there emerged a point of reference that provided them with the opportunity to see change and growth. Having a safe zone, the student teachers were able to better deal with change, viewing it as the next step in their development.

The role of self becomes the cohesiveness of the process. If we treat the student teachers as active members of the research team and respect that every part of the practicum process must move through their self-focused and self-taught filters, the picture becomes invaluable.

CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS AND PERSONAL RESPONSE

Discussion

The naturalistic posture that involves all shareholders from the start, that honors their input, that provides them with decision-making power in guiding the evaluation, that attempts to empower the powerless and give voice to the speechless, and that results in a collaborative effort holds more promise for eliminating such hoary distinction as basic versus applied and theory versus practice. (Lincoln and Guba, 1986).

The world of research is encapsulated by a descriptive atmosphere. The pictures we present as a result of doing our research combine to create the environment of our reality. Each new picture slightly changes the contour or the colors caught in that moment and, as a result, the picture continually changes. Reaching beyond the traditional design of quantitative research, qualitative research acknowledges the ever changing reality of a single construct, anchoring it in the contextualization process of naturalistic research.

Using qualitative tools, allowed me to look beyond statistics and enter into the heart or essence of three student teachers experiences.

Quality is the essential character or nature of something; quantity is the amount. Quality is the what: quantity is the how much. Qualitative refers to the meaning...while quantitative assumes the meaning and refers to a measure of it. (Dabbs, 1982, p. 32)

As I began to look through the results of my data collection, I became aware of distinct patterns in the practicum experience of the three student teachers. Although virtually impossible to generalize any experiential process, many of the themes that emerged from the practicum experience reflected a peculiar singularity — the foundation for change. It is at this one poignant crux, though, that the similarity stops. Any other elements become secondary, supplementing the primary goal with secondary objectives. Like a rite of passage, the field experience delivers no more than the essential, yet rudimental, vehicle for development. This one principle dictates

incontestable acceptance. The implication of such a myopic approach is that the aim and focus of those involved in the teacher education business must shift from emphasis on academic feats, competency-based checklists and the mastery of acceptable behaviors to the humble conclusion that if all we accomplish is to provide an experience that allows for self-exploration, transformation and change, we have been successful.

Propositions

From the data emerged several propositions regarding the experiential nature of the student teacher's practicum.

1. The complexity of the field experience contributes to a dialectical element of the classroom experience — the external (extraneous) and internal (intrinsic) proponents — and the combination of each component created the spectrum of experiences known as the practicum. Moving through the practicum the student teacher enters into the core of the classroom experience. The two facets, internal and external, reflect the componential reality of any educational tradition. All members of the practicum process incorporate and encourage this dualistic definition of educative practice:

A. Internal versus external — There is an obviously stronger reliance upon the external, measurable, and recognizable indications of educational success. These are easier to document and do not require significant time or resources to collect and detail. The internal, intrinsic, evidence presents an abstract, inclusive, and somewhat intangible description. In order to save on time and resources, too often the system relies upon external indications of success, such as the student teacher achieving the "correct classroom behavior" in order to determine successful progress. Due to budgetary restraints or philosophical differences, the program is unable to move beyond the modified, competency based checklist. Resulting is the system of utilizing the external indicators, typified behaviors, as a basis on which to critique the internal evolution of the student teacher.

B. Practical versus Theoretical — The university institute deals primarily with the theoretical proponents of the educational premise. The classroom experience focuses upon the mastery and practical application of teacher ability. Within the structure of the practicum, although each share a common goal, the university and the school classroom have agendas of their own to cover. Again

these shareholders, coming from very different corners of the educational organization perpetuate the divisional construct.

C. Formal and Informal — Dealing with the many influences and situations, the student teachers divide the process into manageable sub-processes, the informal and formal components of the practicum. The formal elements (such as school resources and library help) are accessible by the student teacher and provide some support in the apparent classroom situation. The informal elements refer to the assumptions and ideologies that guide the creation of each educational experience. Expectantly, this part of the set-up is not as easily accessible.

The selective exploration of the field experience may depict a somewhat narrow and constricted view of the facilitation of the practicum. Yet it is within this myopic scope and sheltered process that student teachers are placed in the classrooms. Allowing for the personal views and needs of the student teacher, the program can compensate and build up a unified approach towards student teaching. By shifting one's paradigm to account for "the other side", student teachers recognize the dichotomy of the program, the process can better represent the holistic nature of the teacher training process.

2. The paradoxical nature of conflict creates valuable and necessary learning experiences that contribute to the development of the neophyte teacher. Conflict can be used by all members of the practicum process as a means for exploring new ways to encourage growth during the field experience. If, in order to deal with the issues of the classroom, participants' perceptions broadened and their professional style matured to incorporate new skills and to define necessary responses, then conflict, as a catalyst, could be a valuable instructional tool. Conflict could become an active and recognized component of the practicum process. Instead of instructing the student teachers to avoid all types of conflict, university classrooms could utilize the same resources to address and emphasize that conflict is simply part of the learning experience. Teacher educators must explore the negative connotations connected to conflict and re-address the concept of conflict from our own interpretive paradigm, begin to recognize and see it as a powerful tool, supporting it as an agent for growth.

Conflict is also experienced by all members of the program. If we acknowledge that conflict crosses all system barriers and is represented in all aspects of the practicum experience, the focus of the practicum experience must be reconstructed to include the paradox of conflict. Instead of working diligently to transfer usable skills that will minimize the amount of conflict experienced, teacher educators must recognize the growth potential of the conflict experience. The phenomenon of conflict lies in its power to facilitate transformation, to cut away at the generic superficiality of one's experience and force us to re-examine the very heart of our being and our beliefs.

3. The foundational structure of the student teaching program is permeated with political assumptions and saturated with the political ramifications and agendas of all participants of the practicum process. As the student teacher enters the classroom, s/he is immediately exposed to its political context. All contributing elements that constitute the practicum process have a political contextualization that juxtapositions with each other, forcing a superficial sense of stability. It is within this foundational soil that the student teacher is planted. Unaware of the composition of the process, the student teacher is often left to her/his own devices to make sense of the political hodgepodge of expectations.

In attempting to create a collaborative and supportive learning environment, there needs to be an awareness and a recognition of the vast diversity of each member's political agendas. Issues and concerns which emerge are fueled by the political nature and disposition of the incongruous composition of the field experience members. If there is an awareness as to the extensiveness of the political axis running through the practicum, the student teacher may accommodate for its influence.

4. Teacher education programs need to recognize field experience as essentially a continuation of the student teacher's life-long learning experience and, acknowledge the role of past, as well as present, experiences in the professional development of the neophyte teacher. Although professional credibility demands that evaluation remain a key component of the recognition process and therefore

an incontestable reality, the paradigm of inquiry should reflect the on-going nature of any learning experience, recognizing and giving credibility to the educative role of both past and present experiences. The lack of harmony between program design and process objectives belittles the many hours the student teacher spends in a classroom, and does not recognize the educational value of non-classroom learning experiences.

The very nature of teaching supports an inclusive model of the practicum, involving the student teacher in the totality of the school community. By attempting to compartmentalize the field experience into a segmented process, focusing on mastery and specific behaviors, there becomes no depth to the practicum experience. Relating issues and approaches to the student teacher's philosophy of education moves beyond simple replication of successful techniques to personalization of practices or the grounding of one's self in the practicum process.

Implications

One of the great mysteries of research is the usability and the transferability of the information gathered. Analyzed data has the potential to hold an enormous ability to affect those that hold a connection to the subject(s) that was being researched. Implications imply that there can be a relationship established between what was uncovered and what is yet to be uncovered, between the data and the situations that created the data, and that this will in some way provide a better understanding of our role in this continuous evolutionary process that we casually label life.

Implications for Practice

1. **Teacher education programs need to be aware of and include in their pre-practicum program an introduction to the personnel in the school community, their roles in the school and how they will interact with the student teacher's field experience.** Before the student teacher enters the classroom, it is imperative there be an understanding or at least an awareness of the relationships that will develop and the potential dynamics resulting from the interaction between all members involved in the practicum.

2. Contextualization of the practicum experience contributes to the development of the student teacher's professional identity.

The practicum should strive to facilitate the anchoring of the student teacher in her/his program. The process provides grounding, stability and support as the student teacher addresses issues and concerns, positioning one's self in response to the contextual experience. This feature provides safety and security, facilitating an awareness to the reality and complexity of the teaching profession.

3. Address the need for student teaching to facilitate adoption into the teaching community and acknowledge the importance of developing professional relationships with each facet of the educational institution. To achieve successful and positive acculturation, the student teachers must be involved with all aspects and stages of the education profession and encouraged to develop realistic relationships with the members of each sect. A collaborative effort works to present a unified picture of the profession to the student teacher and provides the necessary support and resources to encourage the neophyte teacher.

4. Design and incorporate components into the practicum which will help the student teacher integrate into the school community and develop key relationships during the practicum program. Moving beyond the traditional introductory observation period, this initial stage of contact should incorporate practices that encourage the student teacher to explore the entire school community. The teaching institution, as well as the host school, must develop an introduction to school culture and classroom life. Modifying the focus of early contact to include the objective of socialization would provide an excellent opportunity for the establishment of key relationships.

5. Implement an awareness and training program to educate school staff as to their role in facilitating the practicum process. Encourage a whole school involvement approach versus the traditional one teacher/one classroom method. This does not necessarily insinuate a professional teaching center but merely that the school community is aware of and shares the responsibility of inviting student teachers into their facility.

Allow the student teacher to sample the totality of the school-based experience by preparing all members of the school community to participate in the field experience.

6. Move from a positivist method of evaluation to a naturalistic paradigm incorporating an inclusive grading procedure rather than attempting to compile the ultimate check list. As the focus of the teacher education program moves away from the narrow, behavior-based grading system to include an all-encompassing and complex picture of the student's teaching ability and professional posture, so must the evaluation process transform to fit the needs of the curriculum.

7. Establish a collaborative working relationship between the university and the school site. Active collaboration between school and university, reaching a philosophical and methodological consensus, contributes to both an awareness of the contributions and needs of each member and a strong foundation to the teacher education program. Identifying and accepting the political reality of each member, acknowledging the potential for conflicting contexts, provides foundation for a mutual goal of teacher education. Introducing and including the student teachers to the political agenda of each institution acquaints the student teacher to the political reality of the classroom.

8. Capitalize on the fact that conflict in the practicum experience is inevitable. Every student teacher that steps into the school community is going to experience some form of conflict. Rather than focusing on avoiding conflict, it would be beneficial to remove the negative connotation from the concept of conflict and use its inevitability as a potential teaching tool of the practicum experience. Instead of the "do or die" motif, focus on the "live and learn" design. Strive to provide conflict resolution, conflict management or transformative learning courses that see conflict as a way to facilitate personal growth and understanding.

9. Incorporate previous life experiences of the student teacher into the teacher education program. Prior to the actual field placement the student teacher needs to be recognized as an active contributor to the context of the learning process. The act of involvement gives both credibility

to past learning experiences and provides the institute with immediate feedback regarding the potential effectiveness of the program's strategies. Develop and incorporate adult learning and development theory in the process; use experience as a way of determining learning activities in the practicum.

10. Incorporate reflection into the teacher education program and practicum's program objectives, encouraging interpretation of the experience and the self-exploration of personal philosophy and beliefs. One of the goals of the practicum is the professional growth of a neophyte teacher. Growth, exhibiting an increasing awareness of the implications of the teaching profession, is a result of the student teacher's internalization of the education program. Preparing reflective practitioners requires considerable time and effort. To move beyond simply mirroring selected desirable behaviors and begin to deepen the experience, the student teacher can use her/his philosophy and beliefs as focusing lenses to interpret and make the experience meaningful. Reflection provides opportunity to access this essential element of learning.

Implications for Further Research

Questions that could form research inquiry, as a result of this research, may be patterned after the following:

1. How does the amount of pre-practicum contact between the student teacher and the host school affect or influence the development of the interpersonal relationship between the student teacher and other members of the school community?
2. To what extent does the student teacher initiate and participate in interpersonal relationships with members of the school community and what effect do these contacts, or lack of contacts, have upon the perceived success of the teaching experience?
3. How does the current teacher education program promote professional acculturation and how effective are these practices at influencing the student teacher involved in the practicum experience?

4. How do current evaluation practices influence the student teacher's experience of involvement to change within the practicum process and does the concept of evaluation cause the student teacher to modify their approach to meeting the program objectives?
5. What is the impact of current practicum evaluation practices on students as they learn to become a teacher? How does the university and the school community define conflict in the classroom experience and what is their approach to the issue of evaluation in the context of their definition of conflict?
6. How do student teachers respond to conflict in their practicum and how does conflict affect the student teachers perceptions of their classroom experience?
7. How do the levels of involvement of the shareholders in the student teaching process affect the design of the practicum?
8. To what extent is the student teacher aware of and understand the formal and informal practicum objectives of each shareholder and how do the objectives influence or affect the student teacher's approach to the classroom?
9. What is the practice of reflection and how does the student teacher develop this facility and what impact does it have on the practicum experience?
10. What areas of the practicum are most predisposed to the practice of reflection and how are these areas affected or influenced as a result of the reflective process?
11. How does the current teacher education program acknowledge/recognize past learning experiences and how does the teaching institution utilize the student teacher's life experiences to facilitate the practicum program?

Personal Response

To be able to see is a blessing,
to understand and paint what I see a miracle.

C. Sayler

Qualitative research has been approached by many a prospective researcher and from many angles. Within the paradigm of naturalistic inquiry it is easy to understand the reluctance of some researchers to enter into this mode of thinking, because in exploring your data, you explore yourself. With so many different approaches to conducting qualitative research I found choosing a method became a learning process in itself.

From the very conceptualization of this thesis I knew that I wanted to use a naturalistic paradigm to conduct my research. I have always been fascinated by the diversity of people around me. Knowing each student teacher held a unique look at life and by spending time to get acquainted with them, I was able to catch glimpses of what they saw. But it wasn't until I was placed in the position of having to accurately, without bias, record, analyze and present the lives of my participants that I began to truly realize the depth and richness of the experience of sharing one's life. I knew that the information I would uncover would be useful to those with an interest in experiential learning. What I achieved offered myself much more.

This phenomenon is neither uncommon nor undocumented, as many researchers have experienced personal transformation as a result of conducting their research. "It is commonly understood that objects of inquiry, when they are human, may react to the inquirer of their inquiry methods. Less appreciated is the fact that the inquirer is also subject to interaction. Just as the inquirer may shape the respondent's behavior, so may the respondent shape the inquirer's behavior." (Guba and Lincoln, 1982, p. 318). Through the process of exploring the experience of the participants, it was possible to explore my own life and how I was relating to the process.

Asking the student teachers to explore their inner beliefs about student teaching triggered my own personal introspection.

It was difficult to separate myself from the research. Working through the emergent themes I realized that the very issues that I was presenting were occurring in my own professional life. I was personifying the data. To keep the data as pure as possible, I acknowledged this and proceeded to identify, recognize and deal with my bias and issues as mine and the participants' issues and biases as theirs. By physically listing my assumptions and the pertinent issues of my life at that time, I was able to recognize where my story started and the participants' story stopped.

My supervisor also provided the invaluable role of a sounding board, listening to my ideas and providing the necessary probing questions to aid in the clarification and focusing stages. It is not only important but vital to have someone, with a genuine interest, to offer support and, sometimes necessary, constructive criticism. This helped me to make my many random, abstract ideas come together into something tangible. For it is one thing to know what I am thinking and why but it is another to be able to articulate it to a colleague. For this I am forever in her debt.

My research has given me another perspective into the process of becoming a teacher. It forced me to reflect on my personal history as a student teacher and recognize that my story was being told as well as the stories of my participants. Issues that they have had to work through I, too, had faced. By moving through their stories into the very core of their experience I found my voice too and began to repaint my experience as well.

As a professional educator, this research process has also given me "food for thought" regarding my role in the teacher education process. Being a teacher in the classroom and a faculty consultant in a university practicum program, I anticipated that the research would touch my perception of the process. I was not disappointed. As the issues and categories emerged I began to reflect on my own experiences. By exploring the needs, wants, and desires of the student teachers, I became cognizant of how I could make the practicum experience more relevant and meaningful. I became aware of

pitfalls, problems and the pragmatic attitude that appeared to be prevalent when I went through the process, and now I had the benefit of distance to deal with these.

As Max van Manen (1982) aptly reminds researchers "...the question of knowledge always refers us back to our world, to our lives, to who we are, and to what makes us write, read, and talk together as educators" (p. 298). By increasing my awareness and sensitivity to these issues, I, as an educator and a person, have broadened my sense of perspective, challenged the truth of my reality, and become aware of my power to influence and, yes, the potential to change the world around me.

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Appendices

Appendix

Appendix A

Dear Dr. X,

I hope this letter finds you in good spirit and good health, and enjoying the wonderful spring weather that we are experiencing. It has been many years since we last had contact with each other, in fact, if I remember correctly, seven years to be exact. In 1985, you were in charge of the practicum and were observing me in action at an Academy in Edmonton. Those were the days!

Today I find myself in a similar situation except the roles are reversed. Presently, I am enrolled in a Masters program at the University of Alberta and my graduate assistantship for this year is being a faculty consultant for those involved in the phase three of their practicum. It has been a very interesting time and indeed a learning experience, but has also led to the development of my thesis. This is where CUC enters the picture.

Although I have access to the student population here at the University of Alberta, I would like to conduct my research with in the halls of my Alma Mater and would like to get some feedback from you as to the feasibility of this. My research focus is the student teacher's practicum and, by using journal writing and encouraging the reflectiveness of the student, define themes and issues which the student feels is important to the practicum situation and whether or not these themes coincide or relate to the practicum's objectives.

As you can tell, this type of research will be qualitative. The reasons I want to conduct my data collection at CUC are many; on campus accessibility of participants; practicum starting at a later date; lack of an available faculty consultant for the student teacher; practicums may occur at a school site a great distance from CUC (encouraging the independence and possibly

influencing the reflectiveness of the student); a Christian College; the list could go on.

I am more than willing to guarantee complete anonymity, and submit a copy of my research objectives and methodology for the college's approval. The purpose of this letter is to find out if in fact this research project is indeed welcomed and what response this proposal would receive.

I am not sure as to the school's policy regarding research and would welcome any feedback or direction you would be willing to give me. I am aiming to have this research project completed with one year and hope to begin data collection by May.

Thank-you for your time and if you have any questions, please, do not hesitate to contact me at (home) 455-0000, (fax) 454-0000, or leave a message at (work) 454-0000.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Appendix B

RESEARCH PARTICIPANT INTEREST FORM

Introduction

Student teaching is perhaps the most intense aspect of your teacher training experience. This bit of practicum may be the turning point of your careers - either in a positive manner or as a re-directive power. Either or, student teaching is the caldron in which you throw all of the theory and all of your skills together and, after six weeks, combine to form a mixture which you recognize as yourself.

The purpose of this research project is to provide practioners with a better understanding of what actually occurs within the practicum from the reflective perspective of the student teachers themselves. Rather than doing a statistical evaluation, such as a survey, this information will come from having the student teacher keep a journal for the six week period of their practicum. Using this approach addresses what the students consider as being valuable and presents a picture that only they can provide.

Methodology

Four participants will be involved in journal writing their experiences during the six week practicum and will then submit their journals to the researcher (University of Alberta graduate student - Carrie Sayler). There will be three follow-up interviews (conducted on campus) to clarify , and comment on information and themes found in the journals. Participants have the right to complete anonymity and the right to withdraw from the study at any time. More information will be supplied before the study begins.

If you would be interested in participating in this project, please complete the following questions and return this form to **(secretary)** as soon as possible.

Your support is greatly appreciated. Thank-you!

Name:.....
.....

Age:.....

Subject area and location of practicum:.....

Appendix c

Please deliver ASAP

TO: Education Department
Canadian Union College
From: Carrie Sayler
ATTN: Secretary

Dear Ms. (secretary),

The following document is a consent form that needs to be delivered/given to the following list of students as soon as possible. From my conversation yesterday with Dr. X, we came to the conclusion that if these forms could go out to the classes today and tomorrow, we may be able to catch most of these specific students. It is imperative that I be able to have these forms back by the middle of next week (April 28).

I would appreciate it if you could photocopy 13 copies of the following fax and distribute it to the classes. I have asked them that they return it to you rather than Dr. X for as I understand, he may not be available.

If you have any questions you can get a hold of Dr. X as he may be able to fill you in on any other details. If not, do not hesitate to leave a message for me at 454-7553.

Here is the list of students I would like you to distribute this form to (some of the names may not be complete as I am not sure of the spelling-good luck!):

• Ariel

• Larry

After collecting the responses, I would appreciate receiving them back ASAP, perhaps put them on Loomis or Federal Express (collect, of course). Send them to this following address:

Carrie Sayler

c/o Sayler's Supplies

15795-116 Ave

Edmonton, Alberta

ph# 454-0000

Thank-you, in advance, for assisting me in this. I do appreciate it.

Appendix D

Dear Ariel,

Before I begin, I want to thank you for allowing me to access your practicum. This is such an exciting adventure and I'm glad that you are willing to give me a bit of your time. I think you will enjoy this research project and may learn a little bit about yourself and the way you function as a teacher, as a person.

Here is your journal.

Just to repeat some of the important aspects, there are a few stipulations. You **must** write in it at least **three times a week** (kinda like aerobics) and may write much more if you would like to. I encourage you to take advantage of this reflective practice, you will discover so much if you do.

This is essence of my research and needs to be done faithfully. For out of your journal writing will come the direction and insight needed to formalize my thesis. Through our combined efforts we will attempt to come up with a new way of thinking about a student teacher's practicum, we will be grounding theory. There is more information on the information sheet.

If you need me for anything (encouragement, more paper, etc) contact me at once. I can be reached through this fax number (403) 454-0000 or possibly at my home number (403) 455-0000.

Thanks again,

Appendix E

Dear Ariel,

As I sit here looking at all the work I have ahead of me, my mind begins to think of all the little things that I need to be aware of and try to space these little things in such a way that I can get all of them done. I want to be sure that I use your time as well as my time wisely and that this process will be as painless as possible! Well, o.k. maybe just a little bit of a pain, but soon it will be over.

One part of my thesis that I am contemplating including is a synopsis of personal information (history) about yourself. This would provide such basic information as date of birth, where you grew up, simple background information. It would be good if you could include some present information as area of specialization of degree, what year you were in the program, those types of comments. This information would be utilized only if I received your permission, otherwise, I may use very general information to build some sort of support of your character.

Ariel, if you have any questions or comments, remember, feel free to contact me. Thank-you for all of your time and your efforts. I truly do appreciate it and hope that you may gain a better understanding of yourself as I am gaining insight into myself.

I'll talk to you soon,

INFORMATION SHEET

Guidelines

The following are some guidelines which will help you with your journal writing experience:

- **Journal at least three times a week.** You are welcome to write in your notebook as often as you wish — what every you wish. You may wish to use your notebook as a source of field notes, recording snatches of things that you find meaningful, but there must be three journal entries per week of your practicum
- **Anything Goes.** You have the freedom to write as much as you wish, on whatever topic you wish. This could run the full gamut: people you work with, experiences in the classroom, your performance, your lessons, the place where you work, your students, the parents, your feelings, your opinions, your concerns. Because of the anonymity of this study, you can address any issue, whether controversial or of a sensitive nature, whether seemingly trivial or trite. Everything is of value, nothing is preferred over the other. Whatever is relevant to you at that time is the only criteria to be aware of.
- **Use one source for your journal writing.** If you have already begun journal writing before you get this notebook, please fasten those pages into the notebook. It is very important that I receive all of your entries and it is so much easier to keep track of your work if it is

in one location. Feel free to include any object in your journal which you find of interest to you or that is of significance to you at that time. If you need more paper, please contact me immediately.

• **Any Questions, Contact Me.** You may have some questions or need additional supplies. If this happens, please contact me immediately. I can be reached at either of these numbers: Fax (403) 454-0000; Home (403) 455-0000; Message (403) 454-0000.

• **Keep Track of Expenses.** If you need to phone me or incur any expenses as a result of this project, keep track of those expenses and I will reimburse you.

Additional Information

You will find enclosed in your package, one journal and a return (GREYHOUND) envelope, an information sheet. When you have completed your practicum please send your journal back to me at the appropriate address below. If you are sending it by mail (those at far distance should send it by mail), please have it registered. Knowing the reputation of Canada Post, I want to take all precautions necessary to insure that your work gets here safe and sound. Please include an address and phone number where I can get a hold of you during the summer. I will be calling you in late August to set up a time when we can get together in the fall. If you have any other questions, give me a call. I will be contacting you in three weeks to see if all is well. Until the fall — Take Care!

Return Address:

Send to:

Carrie Sayler
13715-122 Ave
Edmonton, Alberta
T5L 2W1
Ph# (403) 455-0000

Thank-you for all of your support and willingness to participate in this neat bit of research.